



Spring
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Mouth of The River
Publication of Oyster River High School

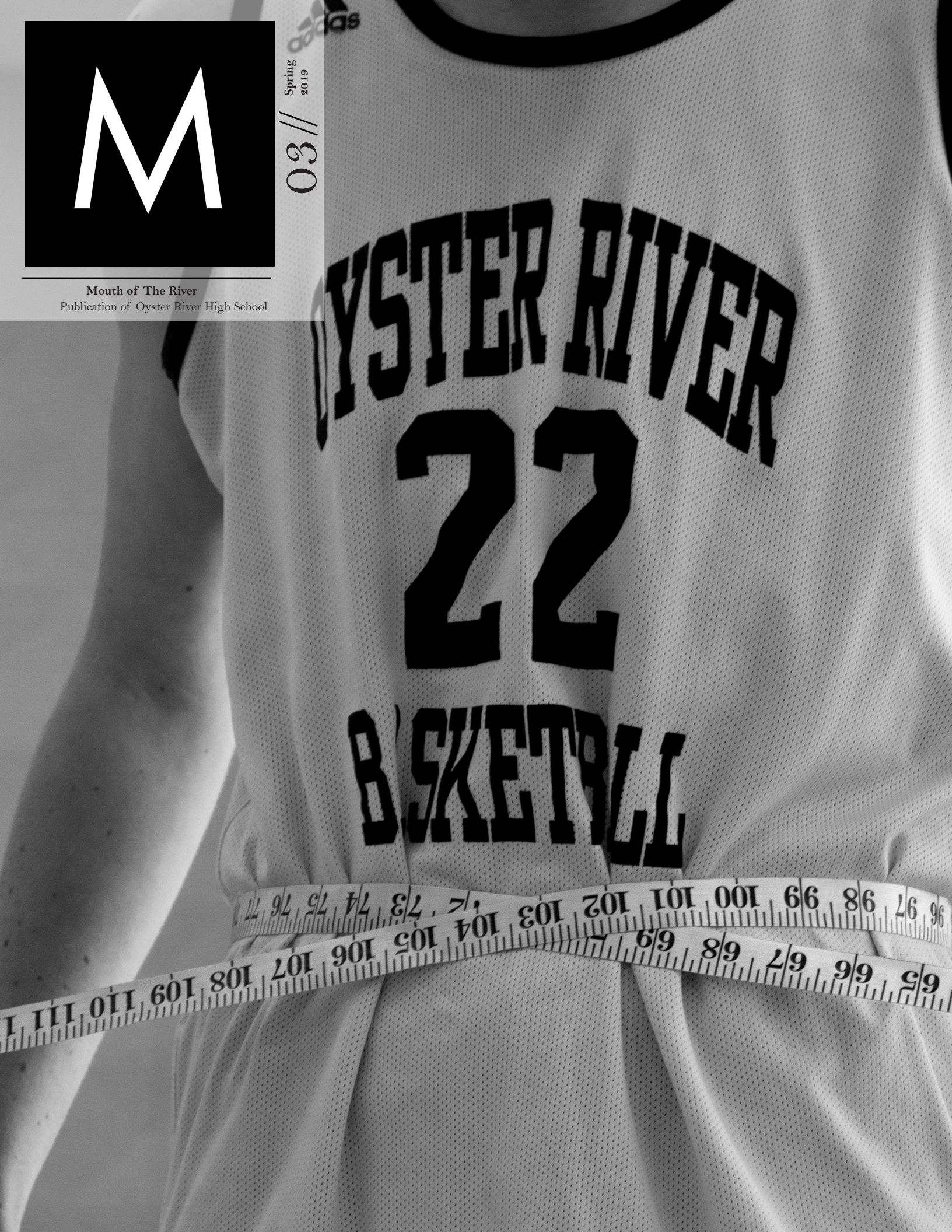

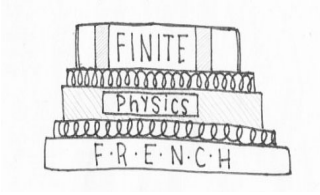
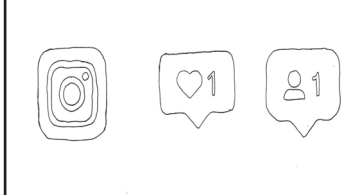



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Dear Reader,

Another issue of *Mouth of the River* has flown by and I am incredibly grateful for the dedication of our staff for producing a top notch magazine that is both informative and entertaining.

Third quarter presents many challenges snow days, the inkling of senioritis, and the feeling that summer will just never come. Our staff, despite these obstacles, continues to create thought provoking stories that I am thrilled to share with the Oyster River Cooperative School District.

In a powerful Op-Ed titled, "Mind Over Mass," Grace Castonguay details how many athletes face challenges when they don't "look" like the athlete they aspire to be. This story serves as the cover for the magazine and was photographed by senior Haley Brown-Bloom and MOR's Creative Director, Phoebe Lovejoy. I believe that this personal story has the potential to influence high school athletes and those around them to create a more supportive environment.

Devan McClain and Grace Castonguay put social media under the microscope in a interesting two-part article. Originally, these pieces were entirely separate, with each writer determining individually the positive or negative effects of social media. By combining their two perspectives, they gained new insight that I believe could spark interesting conversations.

In addition to the articles found in our print magazine, *Mouth of the River* posts stories on our website, mor.news. Phoebe Lovejoy's photojournalism story about ORHS biathlete, Theo Castonguay, opens the readers' eyes to a new sport and a friendly face in the building.

Beyond those mentioned above, there are countless articles important to students, parents, teachers, and community members found within the pages of the magazine and online. If you are not already subscribed to our magazine, I strongly encourage you to do so, as you will receive the issue before anyone else. Contact us via email for additional information.

With that, I am delighted to share with you the third edition of *Mouth of the River*.

Warmly,

Jordan Zercher Editor-in-Chief

MOR Mission Statement: Mouth of the River seeks to reliably inform the student body, as well as the surrounding community, of interesting and newsworthy content in a modern, compelling format. Our goal as a staff is to give a voice to the students of Oyster River, and have it heard by all of our students. The opinions expressed in Mouth of the River represent those of the writers and staff.

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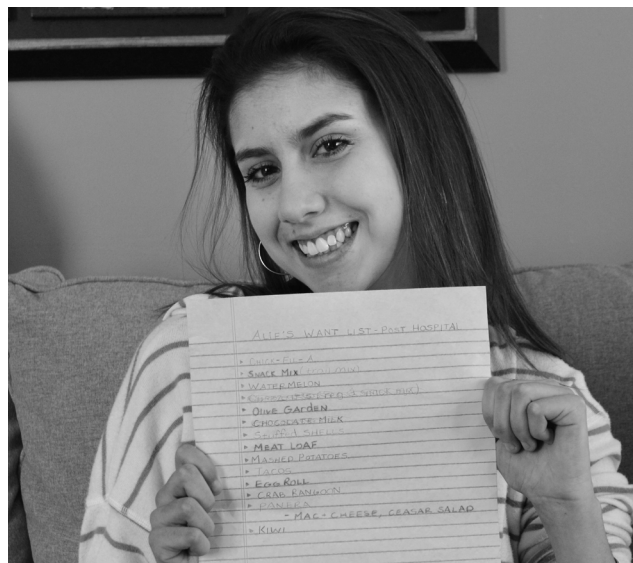
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A Hidden Battle

Alie Santin's fight against Crohn's Disease.



Alie Santin's summer started like any other. As a seventeen-year-old student at Oyster River High School, she spent her days off relaxing by her family's backyard pool and jumping on their new trampoline, both of which gave her an outlet for her self-proclaimed high levels of energy. Santin shared the same excitements for her upcoming senior year as all of her friends: gladly cashing in her upperclassmen status for the security of a parking pass, finally getting to claim a locker in the core, and proudly painting her face blue during her class' last spirit week.

If you looked at Santin's senior photo, you would believe that everything was setting up for this perfect year. Nobody suspected anything out of the ordinary, with the exception of Santin feeling unusually full during meals and some mild stomach pains while eating. Brushing it off as a lactose or gluten intolerance, she continued the activities she loved until the mild pains became excruciating and she stopped eating altogether in the weeks leading up to her long-awaited senior year.

Flash-forward to the evening of January 25th, 2019. Mid-terms week has just ended at the high school, but Santin was not enjoying the same post-exam freedoms of her classmates, many of whom were dancing the night away at the Snowball. Instead, she had just woken up from a three hour surgery at Lahey Medical Center in Burlington, Massachusetts.

The procedure, a bowel resection, removed eight inches of Santin's small intestine and four inches of her colon, along with her appendix to prevent future infection. After enduring five months of various health issues and their subsequent treatments, doctors hoped this surgery would finally be a long-term solution to Santin's diagnosis: Crohn's Disease.

Crohn's is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that occurs when parts of the digestive tract become inflamed during an immune reaction. In Santin's case, the inflammatory flare-ups were primarily located in her small intestine and were what had been responsible for her pain.

"It all started when I would get really full after meals during [the month of] June. I would eat maybe half of a sandwich and it would feel like a full Thanksgiving dinner,"

said Santin. "At first, I thought I was just eating too much or eating unhealthy options, but then it got to the point where even a few bites would result in me being full and having intense pain."

Santin kept this pain a secret in the beginning, explaining, "I didn't tell anybody for the first few months because I thought it was nothing or just some kind of sickness that would pass. It wasn't until I only had a few bites of soup one day and was full that my grandmother suggested I should see the doctor, so I did."

Santin's mother, Stacie, explained this first step towards diagnosis. "We went to the pediatrician and [Alie] got blood work and a few other tests done. But, it was taking time and everything just kept getting worse from there."

Eating was still painful for Santin, and she was beginning to see the effects in other parts of her life. "I couldn't really eat anything and I just felt off all the time," Santin explained. "I started getting fatigued and eventually became anemic, which is when you're really exhausted and feel like you can't do anything."

It was following a trip to Urgent Care for extreme pain that the Santin family was left wondering what was really going on with Alie. They then decided to consult a doctor specializing in the stomach and intestines, also called a gastroenterologist. This decision was also influenced by the fact that Santin's father, Peter, had experienced digestive issues in the past due to ulcerative colitis, another inflammatory bowel disease.

It was now mid-July, around a month since Santin had first started showing symptoms. The gastroenterologist provided the Santins with the first major clue towards a diagnosis of Crohn's Disease by ordering a MRI and colonoscopy for Santin at the end of the summer. Both tests were conclusive, but Santin noted that, "the diagnosis was a bittersweet moment. After weeks of tests and worrying, we had finally found out what was up but it was also hard to hear."

Though treatable with preventative or responsive methods, there is currently no cure for Crohn's Disease. "I would compare [the diagnosis] to failing a test at school and still being

upset when you get it back. You kind of know what is going to happen, but it's hard regardless. The same goes for a chronic illness, but you're realizing that you will have to live the rest of your life with it," explained Santin.

After being officially diagnosed, Santin began her first treatment of intravenous (IV) iron infusions the day before school started. "It was a lot at once. Senior year is already overwhelming with college applications and figuring out your future, but having [Crohn's Disease] hanging over your head at the same time was hard," recalled Santin.

Following the responsive treatment of iron infusions for nutrient replenishment, antibiotics and steroids were prescribed. "Steroids are a tricky thing because you don't want to take too high of a dose right away, but you still want them to be strong enough to work," described Santin's mother, Stacie.

Santin quickly experienced the steroids' negative effects. "[The steroids] would keep me up all night while I was still tired and in a lot of pain. I just wanted to sleep so it would go away, but it was impossible."

Alongside experiencing side effects from her numerous medications, Santin was faced with several emergency hospital trips during the first few months of the school year. "My first hospital stay was for a few days in November because of an abscess on my lower intestine," she described. Santin went on to explain, "when you get flare-ups from Crohn's, everything inside you gets inflamed and it can cause blockage or abscesses, like in my case."

Another blockage would later call for a CAT scan and an eight day hospital stay in December, which extended into the new year. "Doctors initially thought I would need surgery to remove the part of my small intestines that was getting flare-ups, but we didn't expect it to be as soon as January. In fact, we were planning on February break until things kept getting worse," said Santin. "I actually would have had the surgery sooner, but we had to wait until all the steroids were out of my system as a precaution."

Following her operation on January 25th, Santin stayed at Lahey Medical Center for six days. Alongside the countless doctors, nurses, and residents who kept an eye on her were Santin's

parents, who shared a single hospital cot on the floor in order to be closer to their daughter.

The evening following her surgery, Santin awoke in suspense. She didn't know if the doctors had been able to save the function of her intestines or if she would have to live with a colostomy bag. Thinking back to her days spent by the pool and on the trampoline, she was praying for anything but the latter.

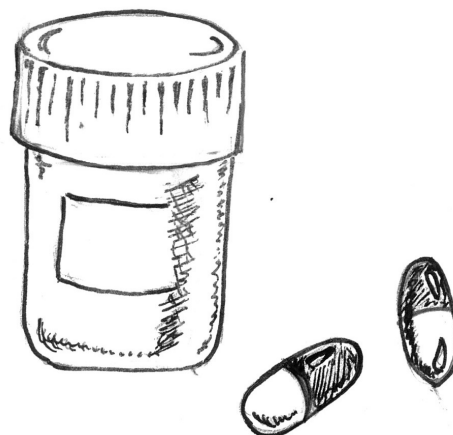
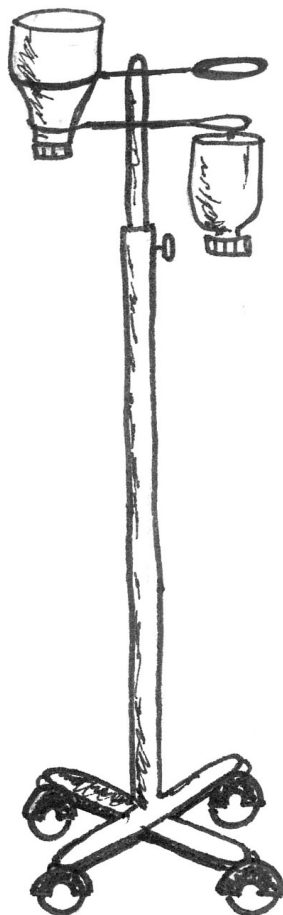
In the recovery wing, Santin breathed a sigh of relief when she was told that enough of her intestines had been saved and that a colostomy bag would not be needed. After being wheeled back to her hospital room, she settled in for a long few days of pain, stiff limbs, and dinners made up of juice and shaved ice.

Since the surgery, Santin is excited to return to what she's been missing from her senior year. "Now that the doctors have taken out the really bad part of my small intestine, I've been able to eat a lot more things. I happy cried the other day when I realized that I could finally eat everything that I want to. It may not seem like a huge triumph to some people, but to me, it really is."

Victoria Leitz ('19), one of Santin's close friends, recalls a moment when things were beginning to return to normal, saying, "Alie also never got to eat her favorite foods, let alone any food at all. I remember getting texts from her where she was just overflowing with excitement because the nurse was letting her eat a piece of toast. To her, that was one of the best moments that she had experienced in a while."

Santin remembered the same moment with similar enthusiasm. "I couldn't have food for days after my bowel obstruction and I was on a liquid only diet. So when they gave me that singular piece of toast, I was so happy. Compared to everything that I had gone through when I first had my bowel obstruction in December, that one piece of toast was a huge victory."

From there, Santin set out to make a "Food List," which included all the foods she had been unable to eat since the summer. "All I could think of when I first saw it was how much it looked like a little kid's Christmas List," said Santin's father,



Peter. “She was so excited to eat all these foods that others don’t even think twice about.”

For Santin, the list was not just about the things she missed, but also a way to move forward. “It’s been awesome to check foods off the list and start moving back towards how I felt before my diagnosis. Since Crohn’s Disease isn’t always physically apparent, I have had people tell me that ‘I don’t look sick,’ when really, I’m hurting a lot. I wish people would understand sometimes,” she explained.

For now, Santin is continuing antibiotics and steroids, along with weekly injections to prevent further flare-ups. Santin also needed medications through an IV for several weeks following surgery, which oftentimes entailed meeting her mother at school to take time out of her day for an infusion.

“Missing school was difficult, so I had to ease back into it following surgery. Since stress can cause flare-ups in Crohn’s, I need to be careful about how much I take on,” said Santin, who is working with administration and the counseling office to figure out the best plan for making up the work she missed while in the hospital.

Despite the struggles, Santin is excited to get back to school without interruptions. “I know it’s hard to believe, but I miss my classes and the work. Not seeing my friends and not knowing what’s going on with everyone has been one of the hardest parts of having Crohn’s; I feel like I’ve missed so much of what is supposed to be the best year in high school.”

Santin’s friends shared these sentiments. “Before her diagnosis, Alie’s life was much more easy-going. She lived every day the way she wanted and loved every minute of it,” said Leitz. “I don’t think anything could have prepared her for this outcome



once she started feeling different. After she was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease, it became obvious that her whole life had been flipped upside-down.”

Edwin San Juan (’19), another close friend of Santin’s, touched upon how Crohn’s Disease also impacted her social life, saying, “the hardest thing I imagine she has to face is constantly being separated from her friends due to hospital visits and pain from Crohn’s.” San Juan also noted that despite this, Santin’s friends are hopeful for the future. “Prior to her surgery, our friend group was very limited in what we could do and for how long, and I’d always be worried about if she was in pain or not. Now that she’s basically able to eat what she wants again, I’m looking forward to having Alie get her freedom back.”

Despite the uncertainties of her situation, one thing is clear: Santin has remained optimistic through all odds.

“Even with her illness she’s never failed to brighten up our days,” said San Juan. “Her life has been much more difficult and she’s faced many hard times, but she never fails to bring a smile to our faces.”

Leitz agreed, adding, “I can’t begin to describe how amazingly Alie has handled her entire situation. She has always been a positive person, which is one of the many reasons why people love her. But her disease turned her positivity into not just one of her qualities, but one of her strengths,” she said. “There were so many moments where she could have let the world know how she was feeling and complain, but instead she focused on the positive things in her life, even if they were so little.”

Santin described these little things as, “being able to call friends while in the hospital,” and, “getting to help residents learn at the teaching hospital during rounds.” Now that she is back at home and recovering, Santin continues to find happiness in successes like climbing the stairs without feeling tired and driving herself to Panera Bread for lunch with her friends.

Though the results of Santin’s long-term fight against Crohn’s Disease may not be predictable, she is hoping to use her current experiences to help others in the future. “I want to major in Psychology in college with an end-goal of being a therapist,” explained Santin. “Since I’ve seen the effects chronic illness can have on a person, I want to help people realize that there is support and that they’re not battling their disease alone.” **M**



—Devan McClain

Photos by Devan McClain

Artwork by Phoebe Lovejoy

Monsieur Lord: Life after Oyster River

"He's always ready to laugh. He's extraordinary caring when you need him. He will champion you and that is always so wonderful to know," says Oyster River High School French teacher Barbara Milliken, friend and former colleague of retired ORHS French teacher Stephen Lord. "Mr. Lord sees the world with rose colored glasses. He's an eternal optimist,"

I had the privilege of having Mr. Lord as a french teacher my first two years of high school. His thoughtful and personalized approach to education helped me enjoy learning a subject I previously struggled to grasp. I decided to write this piece explaining how he's been spending his retirement years, as many other students in the community have been impacted by his presence and are curious as to where he is now.

As the ever familiar friendly face of the ORHS hallways, Lord had worked as a French teacher at ORHS since 1985 before finally retiring after the 2016-2017 school year. Lord was known by many for his optimistic and caring attitude towards not only his students, but the school as a whole. He left a positive, lasting impression on the school community by spreading his passion for the French language and helping students enjoy learning it by fostering a fun, yet productive classroom environment.

He now spends his time in retirement substitute teaching at ORHS, as well as pursuing various personal hobbies, such as gardening and cooking.

Lord's approach to teaching was the fundamental characteristic that set him apart in the eyes of the student body. "He has a real hands on approach, and his classroom was always fun," says Milliken. "So even if you were learning history or something that could be really boring, he has a way of infusing all of his lessons with humor, which is something that becomes very memorable to kids."

Lord made the decision to become a French teacher after he spent over a year in France during college. "When I started traveling to France in college - I spent a month in Paris and a year in Dijon- I really loved the language and culture and rich history. I wanted to share what I saw and experienced with others- then I decided to teach," says Lord.

One of the most rewarding things for Lord to experience as a teacher was watching his students french abilities grow. "It was so nice to see their improvement in the language over a period of years," says Lord. "The icing on the cake was when they continued after graduation with the language either formally or in various jobs and travel experiences."

His caring for his students expanded beyond their French abilities. He was always passionate about making sure to connect

with each of his students, by showing them enthusiasm and excitement in the classroom. "He loved to sing - he would sing a lot and give everyone a nickname. That kind of showed how connected he was with his students," says former student and advisee of Lord, Carly Hoag ('19).

Lord's caring approach to teaching reached further than just French. He applied the same attitude to advising his group of students, a group that included Hoag. "In class, he was always really happy and loved to joke around, and he would still do that in advisory, but he also would ask how you're doing and feeling," says Hoag. "He was the first teacher I kind of connected with, so that kind of opened a door to saying, hey, maybe high school is pretty ok."

His prescence was a light to not only his students, but his colleagues as well. Milliken worked alongside Lord to develop the world language program at Oyster River Middle School 17 years ago. "He just made teaching and planning so much fun," says Milliken. "He was a great mentor to me, because I taught for 17

years at the middle school, so to come here and learn the ropes of teaching the high school, he helped me a lot."

He was equally as fun loving and caring both in and outside of the classroom. "At his retirement party, he brought gifts for all of us, and they all had some sentimental, hysterical memory of something that happened while we were all together teaching," says Milliken.

Lord has continued to connect with his students by substitute teaching at the high school during his retirement. "I love seeing the kids; I genuinely miss the interactions with them," says Lord. "Subbing gives me the opportunity to do this as well as see my colleagues. After going to one place to work for 32 years, it is hard to give up those connections. So I get to do all I mentioned without homework or planning. Can't get too much better than that."

Lord has also spent his retirement years continuing his passion for travel. "We went to see our goddaughter's baby girl in Ohio, spent a long weekend up north in Conway at a condo with friends, and a few days at Foxwoods," says Lord. "We are now planning a trip to Florida next month and a 4 day trip to Woodstock, Vermont, in May."

The impression Lord's caring attitude and passion for teaching the French language will stick at ORHS, even after his days of substitute teaching are over. "Kids remember him because of all of the wonderful attributes that he added to Oyster River, besides just what he did in his classroom." says Milliken. **M**



- Carola Davis

Photo by Stephen Lord

TIPS FOR FRESHMEN

I walked into the high school, my backpack loaded, my mechanical pencil lead stocked (size .07 of course), headed straight into the storm that was the first day of my freshman year. Walking into the building for the first time triggered an uneasy feeling within me as if the air was perfumed with the smell of anxiety and anticipation. Regardless, this day had to come eventually, so I accepted my struggle and hoped to get through the day without embarrassing myself (we all know where this is going). In my hand was a piece of paper with my schedule conveniently printed, along with my locker number and combination. I headed to my locker, and attempted the combination. The locker didn't open. I tried my combination over, and over again with no luck. Just the day before, I had dedicated considerable time to learning the complex act of opening a combination lock and believed I had saved myself the humiliation of not being able to unlock the locker; I was wrong. It was at the peak of my frustration when a teacher approached me after observing my struggle. She looked at the paper and said, "you're one over hon."

My freshman year continued just as it began, with embarrassing experiences that I had to learn from. Now, as a senior, I have this knowledge under my belt, and the same goes for any upperclassmen. Perhaps you're like me and have already survived through your first year of high school, or maybe you are awaiting it right as you read this article. Regardless, we all understand the fear of the unknown, and to leave the safety net of middle school is a huge change for many.

Where are your classes? Where is the library? What clubs should you join? What if you forget your locker combination? These are questions many incoming freshmen have, and are challenged to learn within the first few weeks. But perhaps you are someone who has already survived through this question filled time, and know the answers yourself.

There are many questions to be had, and many to be answered. So, here we have it ... a collection of tips for freshmen.

"Think to yourself, do I really have a good haircut? Or is it just a teen hair crisis? If the latter, then fix it because it will haunt you forever," advises senior Cameron St. Ours when reflecting on his own experiences as an underclassmen. "Trust me."

A major part of learning from past experiences is regret. Regardless of whether that be a positive or a negative form, it is an inevitability. Some people may look back at the photographic evidence of their past choices with laughter, and some may wish they could rewrite the past.

"I should've listened to my heart and former directors and been more involved in acting," reflects senior Cam Schiavo. "I entered high school with one goal: to get the twelve season athlete award. But goals change with the person, and now all I want to do is act in the plays and perform in the musical."

As the years progress we learn more about ourselves and about who we want to be. So, underclassmen, learn from our mistakes, our experiences, and our regrets and hopefully you will be just fine.

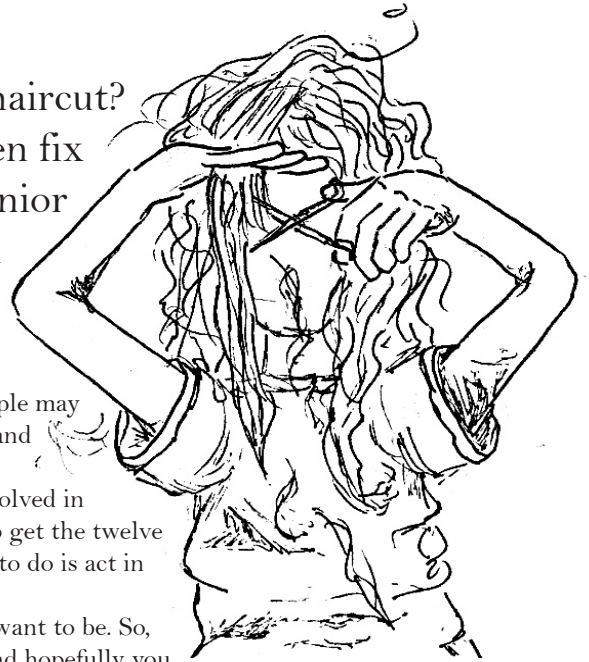
Seniors recall getting overly worked up as freshmen over falling grades. Oyster River senior Tyler O'Connell advises not to dwell on the little things. "Don't get too distraught over one test grade because in the long run, it really won't matter that much."

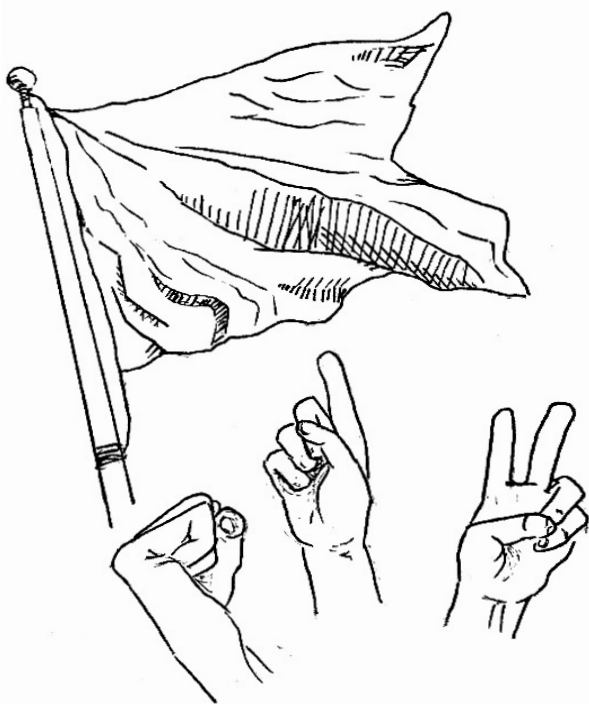
Regarding the classes themselves, freshman Elise Wollheim warns others about taking classes just because your friends are interested and not for your own personal interest. "If someone tells you a class is really easy, it might not be the same for you, so just don't base it off someone else's opinion," she says. "Follow your interests; don't just follow your friends."

An area within the high school where you can, and are encouraged to, follow your interests is with extracurriculars.

"It gives you the opportunity to build friendships and explore your interests and most importantly, have fun," says senior Karlie Stevens, a member of the Girls Varsity Basketball Team. "It is really nice to have a close connection with people in your first year."

School counselor, Kim Sekera discusses her recommendations, "we always say to get involved because there's always that social worry about feeling connected, and there's something for everyone here," she says. "Academics are the primary reason we go to school, but we know that the social piece for development is equally important and can really make or break a student's





high school experience.”

Schiavo agrees, adding, “if you want to continue doing a club or activity you’ve been doing, great. If you want to try something new, people are supportive and will help you. Go off the beaten path a little to really find yourself. High school can really change you into a person you like a whole lot more.”

While participating in extracurriculars is important, navigating the school is not only important but it is one of the most common troubles students face when first entering the school is misdirection, since the school is rather large and hard to navigate.

“I usually say it takes about three days for the students to figure out the building,” says Sekera. “There’s always the fear of the senior core but the number one worry is always walking into the wrong classroom with other students in there. But the overall consensus from past students is three days. It takes about three days to figure out the building.”

Although teachers encourage students to ask around for guidance if they do get lost, the actual act of approaching another student can be daunting for many. Freshman Evy Ashburner encourages students not to hesitate to ask for assistance. “If you do get lost the first week, even if you’re scared, you should just ask the [upperclassmen]. People don’t really know you so don’t be afraid.”

School counselor Jason Baker speaks to the importance of asking for help in your Freshman year, “knowing your resources is very important. Your advisor, the counselors, the school nurse, the administrators... everyone is here to help you,” he advises. “Whether it is academic, social, or emotional support, it is very important to know where to go.”

Much of the fear for incoming freshmen comes from the intimidating upperclassmen, specifically the seniors. This intimidation may come from the fact that there are territories within the school that have been deemed ‘senior only’, like the senior core.

“I feel like I expected there to be more scary seniors but like it really wasn’t that bad,” explains freshman Andy Carlson, specifying, “just don’t go into the senior core. I saw a few freshmen do that in the first few weeks and I told them they probably shouldn’t. But that is something you should know, like stay out of the senior core.” Although there is no rule that prohibits underclassmen from entering the core, the common courtesy is to stay out of it for respect to the seniors.

Another time where people assume that grade division occurs is spirit week. During spirit week, classes are better defined and segregated because they’re in competition with one another. Spirit week is a time where individual classes unite, and for the freshmen class, they are only just beginning to work together. As the years progress, classes begin to get observably more involved and united as a group, thus the freshmen class generally has a lower participation rate.

“You can’t do too much during spirit week, so do as much as you can,” says Carlson when referring to class participation in activities like dressing up. “As a freshman, I didn’t know what it was going to be like, so I was kind of winging it, but doing more is definitely better.”

Freshman Charlotte Cousins explains what she believes to be the most important tips for freshmen. “There are probably two things, one of them being that [high school] is not so bad, it’s not really that scary,” says Cousins. “Also, you can’t be scared to do things. In middle school, people don’t like to do things because they don’t want to be judged, but when you come here, it’s okay because everyone here is so accepting.”

Overall, it’s important to remember this feeling of acceptance, even though high school can seem like a scary place. At the end of the day, be yourself, do what makes you happy, participate in class activities, don’t stress too much about your grades, and never shy away from a new haircut. **M**

Goodluck!

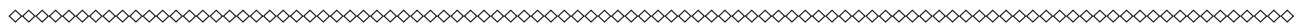
—Anna Sourdif
Artwork by Gabbe Albert

Jake Baver: Looking to the Future

“Jake basically put his whole life on hold for the last six or seven years while dealing with cancer,” explained Charlie Crull, a good friend of Jake’s. He continued, “no one would ever know what that’s like, until you actually experience it for yourself.”



Jacob Baver, a former Oyster River student, two-time soccer captain, Oyster River paraprofessional, Varsity Soccer Coach, and aspiring writer, has already made his mark on his childhood community of Durham, New Hampshire by the age of 25. The one glaring and defining point in Baver’s life was his medical trouble with cancer, something that detracted from more than six years of his life. Since he was first diagnosed in his freshman year of college, Baver focused on his coaching, writing, and relationships, instead of letting cancer define himself.



Baver entered Oyster River High School as a scrawny, fun-loving, and enjoyable person. As he progressed from a freshman to a sophomore, he left a wide variety of impacts on different people. Self-proclaimed as a goofball and someone that fit into every clique, Baver made sure each of his many relationships were meaningful.

Matthew Pappas, a former teacher of Baver and current social studies teacher at ORHS, agreed that, “he was studious, but he has a very extroverted personality. He liked to talk, goof around, and was the life of the party. He was the one that kept our [World Cultures] class really enjoyable.”

Despite creating a positive impact on teachers at the school, Baver’s athletic relationships began on a sour note. Although a strong athlete and a intelligent person, his priorities seemed to be placed on sports instead of school. “I know everyone looks really highly of Jake, but as a sophomore, he was almost academically ineligible to play,” said Charlie Crull, Baver’s former soccer coach. He noted that by nearly failing two classes his second year of high school, he put his team and personal ambitions on the soccer field at risk. “He ended up figuring it out, but I gave him a whole lot of grief as

he was a player that I was looking forward to coaching and he almost put himself in jeopardy.”

This was a big turning point for Baver, in terms of maturity. Crull maintained that Baver was a solid student afterwards and by the time he was a senior, he was a “leader by example” both on and off the field. Matt Williams, (’19) one of Baver’s players, agreed, saying that as both a coach and an athlete, “when Jake was on the field everyone around him improved. He just attracts that type of energy.” Despite only having him for freshman year, Pappas kept a close relationship with Baver. “Whenever I saw him throughout the next three years, I would always talk to him. He’s the type of person that if you stop and talk to him, he’ll carry on a conversation, as just a warm, fun-loving guy.”

When he graduated, Baver planned to leave the Oyster River community. He thought that, “as a decently intelligent dude, I was going to go to college. I had a plan as to what I wanted to do; I wanted to be a high school English teacher.” He ended up being accepted into the University of New Hampshire, looking to pursue an educational career in writing. He didn’t know it at the time, but his entire senior year he was sick.



"It's almost impossible to not be thinking about being sick. Whether you mean for that to be the case or not, whether you try the best you can to think about the other aspects of real life, it's very omnipresent. Everyone you know is going to ask you about it, not in a way that's annoying (because people care about you), everyone's going to think about that when they think of you, and it's hard not to feel like it completely takes over your identity." - Jacob Bayer

Baver explained that he, throughout his senior year of high school, was expecting more of himself, but in both sports and school he was exhausted. “It wasn’t the kind of thing where it was an immediate impact, so much as just over time I was feeling very worn down and fatigued all the time.” He entered his first year of college, and received his first diagnosis for cancer.

“My cancer is pretty rare. It’s called Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis (LCH). The doctors told me the likelihood of being diagnosed with it is two in a million,” Bayer explained. LCH is known for causing lesions or tissue damage in different organs, both externally, in the eyes and skin, and internally, with the entirety of the Central Nervous System and lungs to name a few. Mutations in certain genes in dendritic cells (cells that fight infection) cause them to multiply. The buildup of these cells results in the damage of other organs, creating tumors. The reason behind the initial mutation is unknown, as the disease isn’t caused by an infection, isn’t contagious, nor is it inherited.

While the doctors never said it would be the end of his life, they didn't have a lot of information from prior cases to give him any outlook of what was going to happen.



“You really, in times like that, realize how important it is to have people that care about you. Otherwise, I don’t know how people get through it. There’s enough physical, mental, and emotional strain involved in doing those treatments, that if you were to say, ‘I think I’m going to go it alone,’ I don’t know how you could.” Family was one of the most important factors in Jake’s progression through cancer and chemotherapy. He noted, “there are just times when you need to lean on people physically and lean on people emotionally.”

Apart from help from his family, Baver used his interests and outlets to get through cancer. Writing, a major passion of his, proved to be one of his favorite things to focus on. Pappas explained that Baver had always avidly pursued writing, and as one of his students he saw the extent of his work. “He’s an amazing writer, that was evident right from day one. He could write like no other student I’ve had.”

The other significant passion of his, soccer, was something that both carried him out of sickness and led to his future after cancer. In looking to his former coach and former team, Baver found in a pastime of his, a way to play and coach the sport he loved.

Crull noted, “coaching was massive for him. Cancer was the worst nightmare, not with the thought of, ‘am I going to die?’ but more that he wanted to be treated like a normal person and not worried about. He loathed the ‘how are you feeling today?’” Baver added that he had, “in an unhealthy way, buried the fact

his condition. “He would come in, sometimes green in the face, and some days you could tell he was in writhing pain, and he would get right to work,” Crull noted.

Williams explained, “Jake invests all of his time and energy to create a bond with each player on the team. I’ve never had a



that I was a cancer survivor three times. Now I can see that I didn’t want to talk about it, and I didn’t want people to know that it was a part of me, that cancer became far more of a part of my identity than accepting it.

Pappas continued, “one thing Jake really focused on was not letting [cancer] define him. He carried on as the same guy he’s always been, and always had a smile on his face, joking around, even when he was sick. He always looked at the positives in life. Cancer was his setback, but there’s so much more in life to enjoy while having that aspect.”

The three major obstacles in Baver’s life, his three bouts with LCH, proved to be the events that attest to his ability to overcome adversity. He has shown his determination and perseverance throughout his medical ordeals, and his interests have both pulled him out of cancer and led into his future.

The turning point from Baver’s sickness into his profession lied with his former coach. Alongside working an afterschool program for elementary school children, Crull invited Baver back to his coach his former team.

Crull explained that, “when I asked him to come and coach, I was basically at rock-bottom. I had basically lost the program, and the values that I wanted the program to be.” Crull, in all of his 200+ wins as a high school soccer coach, began with the bare foundations of the program. Baver was the person who helped construct the mentality that surrounds the sport at ORHS now: Crull described that, “when I brought him in, he was one of the instrumental pieces in helping establish what the program became and what it is today.”

As a coach, Baver gained the respect of the players. By being younger and relating to the team, and by practicing alongside the group to work them, he proved his worth as a coach and pushed the program forward. He would take on the most difficult team members and work with the team as a whole despite

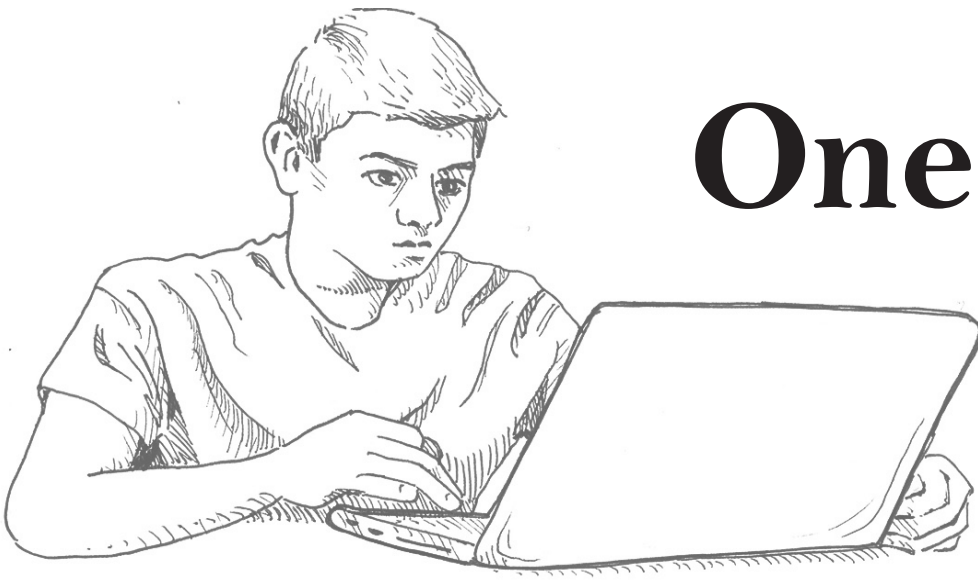
coach more dedicated and committed to the program, but also each singular person and aspect of the team.”

Baver then began to work as a paraprofessional for the school, where he continued to make an impact on the Oyster River community. “His personality is perfect to work in a school. Working with kids, to engage kids, to get the best out of them, I knew that by working with just one student, he would really give his all for that student,” said Pappas. “Even in a class of 22 kids, he may work with one child, but he became a part of the class, and really had a positive impact on everyone around him.”

In January of 2019, Baver left Oyster River High School, both as a coach and a paraprofessional. He is currently working at Flatbread Pizzeria in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and is planning on attending a creative writing program in New England. He going to pursue writing as a career, despite entering UNH with the plan of becoming an English teacher and previously working as a paraprofessional. By working at Flatbread and leaving ORHS, he has the freedom to work on writing fictional pieces that he hopes will get published. “No matter who he’s around, he’s going to make an impact,” explained Pappas. “It’s sort of a blow for the kids here at Oyster River, but on the other hand, he’s young, he has a career to look forward to, and will do bigger and better things. I know he will be nothing but successful in his future.”

Baver expanded that, “to quit this area, is extremely bitter-sweet, but being a para was never an end goal. So now, in working at the restaurant, I can research, write, edit, and meet with people in the writing community, all of which will, hopefully, one day mean I’m published. **M**

- Quinn Wilson
Photos by Matthew Pappas and Jacob Baver



One-to-One

How it went and where it's going.

Three months after the Oyster River Middle School switched to One-to-One, Principal Jay Richard wished he had pushed for the change years ago.

At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, ORMS implemented One-to-One. This means that the school provided every student at the school with a personal computer that will be returned at the end of the year. Administrators, teachers, and students alike enjoyed the switch, which was accompanied by very few complications. With a successful rollout this year, the high school is in the process of developing a similar protocol for going One-to-One, with an estimated start in the 2020-2021 school year.

Specifically for ORMS, each student receives a computer, a charger, and a case, labeled with the student's name, all of which they are allowed to bring back and forth from home. Teachers in the middle school have the opportunity to use the technology as often as they want, alleviating the previous issue of certain classes and electives not being able to use computers due to a lack of computer carts. The switch has allowed teachers to be more creative with their technology usage, as well as to educate their coworkers on the information they've learned.

Before the switch, one of the main issues that the middle school faced was the lack of computer carts within each set of teachers, also known as a team. "We used to have just one cart per team, and then behind the scenes the teachers [...] would all fight over who would get to use the carts," said Richard. He added that the priority typically ended up being language arts, social studies, science, and then math, which rarely had the opportunity to use the technology.

"It's become a real equalizer in the building and I think that's what the students have embraced the most. It's giving them the freedom to explore their own passions."

In an anonymous survey conducted by the Teacher and Student Tech Teams at the middle school, one teacher noted, "we always had to juggle when we would do certain units because of computer access on team." Now that every student has their own computer, every teacher can use computers in their classroom when they want to without limiting each other's plans.

One-to-One is not a new concept. Richard explained that the first middle school in the United States to provide laptops to every student was before the turn of the century. More locally, Maine made a state-wide switch over 15 years ago following the creation of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI).

In the short time that the middle school has been One-to-One, Richard has become a strong proponent of the change and has seen immense benefits. One of the main advantages that Richard highlighted was that every student has the same technology, thus leveling the playing field for all. ORMS tech integrator, Niko Viens, agreed, saying, "it's become a real equalizer in the building and I think that's what the students have embraced the most. It's giving them the freedom to explore their own passions."

Additionally, the implementation of One-to-One has benefits beyond the student's core classes. In past years, Andrea von Oeyen, ORCSD string orchestra teacher, had students film themselves playing their instrument using the school's iPads. These iPads are no longer needed since the computers have cameras, and have been relocated to other schools. Other classes, such as art, world language, and health now have the opportunity to use computers, rather than planning lessons in advance with no promise of the required technology.

With the increase in available technology, students are learning valuable skills such as word processing, typing, and even coding on their own devices. One teacher noted in the survey that, "[One-to-One] has greatly benefited students who struggle with executive function skills; all their due dates, resources, and handouts are now digital. Students are able to maximize their creative

potential with assignments by no longer being restricted by access issues.”

Even more noticable is the increase in accountability placed on the students. “The responsibility is on the student to manage the device and keep it up well and travel with it throughout the day,” explained Viens. She elaborated that the school is hopeful that the kids will use the same device for the four year lease which will reinforce the importance of taking care of the computer. A major concern was the potential for damage or misuse, and although there have been minor examples of both, Viens is pleased with the responsibility of the students.

Veins and Nick Bellows, the ORMS librarian, have created additional opportunities for students to get involved with technology by creating the Student Tech Team. These 12 students submitted an application and were selected out of 25 applicants. They are currently working to create a public service announcement video to remind their fellow students of the importance of keeping their technology safe. This team helped make the survey where many teachers and students were able to respond.

In addition to the impact that students have on their peers, teachers have been sharing with their coworkers how they integrate technology in their classrooms. Some teachers feel more comfortable and passionate about integrating technology into the classrooms, while others might require more information or guidance. The faculty who are exploring technology in an interesting way have the option to invite their fellow teachers



“Learning is made much more interesting since there are more ways to reinforce the concepts they are learning.”

to sit in the back of the classroom and observe. To make this invitation clear, some opt to hang a string of pineapple lights or a pineapple sign over their door which, when lit, welcomes visiting teachers.

Out of the previously mentioned survey, three main concerns arose on the teacher’s side.

“The biggest problem we have [is] kids coming in without computers charged... We send notices home to remind parents the importance of this, but it’s a constant battle!” writes one teacher. Another states, “... a large percentage of the students do not come to school with their computers charged so too many have to run cords all over the place to work with them in class.” One teacher acknowledged that a computer charging station might benefit the classrooms, allowing students to continue to use their device without needing to run cords all around the room.

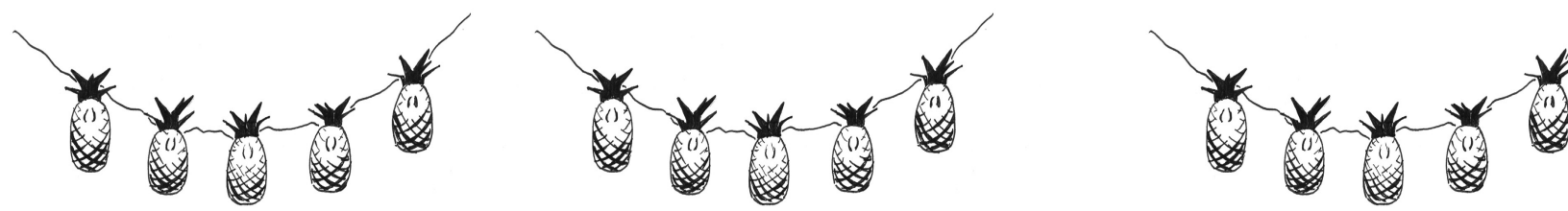
Another issue that has been a learning curve for many was the blocked websites. The IT Department at ORMS blocks certain websites, such as YouTube, sites with inappropriate content, and games, in order to keep students focused. One teacher wrote, “the one negative aspect is that I still have to

vet links and resources through IT because the filters will often not allow student access to sites, even if the materials are indeed school appropriate.” Later in their response they added that these problems are a part of the learning curve but was a source of frustration throughout the year.

Even with the restrictions on websites, there have been concerns that students are misusing the technology, mainly in the form of downloading games. At the beginning of the year, the middle school created a phone policy that prohibits students from using their personal device during the school day. For more information about this change, see Susanna Serrano’s article in last issue or online. This change restricts students from using their own device to play games. Teachers have observed students finding ways around the blocks to download games. One faculty member wrote, “there is a lot of downloading of games, changing the settings, and off-task toggling back and forth on sites when there is an assignment that needs to be completed.”

Out of the 39 teachers who responded to the survey by Sunday March 10, all but one said they believe they One-to-One benefits the students. The teacher who did not completely agree stated, “to be honest, I do not use it much in my classroom, because I believe there can be too much screen time in a day.”

Lastly, a few paraeducators noticed that the Chromebooks they were provided do not have the same capabilities. A paraeducator wrote in the survey, “when my Chromebook is equipped with programs the students and teachers use, I can more easily support my students from my own experience without using their laptops. There are several times when my Chromebook will not function well enough to learn the programs the classes are using, such as Google Earth Pro, that make it much more difficult to assist my students. My Chromebook is also much



slower with processing, so helping students with note-taking and writing often becomes very [inefficient].” They added, “I am grateful to have a Chromebook, but feel I could be much more effective with my students with matching technology.”

The cost was about \$85,000 to provide all 670 student at the middle school with a computer. Based on a recommendation from the school’s IT department, students use a Dell Latitude 3189. This touch screen laptop is equipped with rubber edges, a water resistant keyboard, and a gorilla glass screen.

Since going One-to-One, the middle school has been able to reallocate technology to other schools and reduce other resources within the building. The 16 team computer carts from the middle school were either distributed to the high school or broken up and sent to individual classrooms in the elementary schools. Veins and Bellows claimed that paper usage has decreased dramatically because the computers were not set up with the ability to print, however the direct statistic was unknown.

“[The students] are doing a lot more creating than consuming [...] A lot of times, when you integrate technology it can be, ‘get on this program,’ ‘do this reading program,’ but now there’s so much more creation and evolution of what they’re able to do with it that they’re now going and exploring things,” said Viens.

In April 2018, Mouth of the River published an article detailing the history of One-to-One in the state and the larger purpose and importance behind the topic. At the time, students and faculty alike were interested in seeing when and how the high school will switch. Now that the middle school has made the switch, Suzanne Filippone, ORHS Principal, explained that One-to-One at the high school is indeed coming, but there are still many details to be figured out.

Filippone clarified that there are a few more pieces that need to fall in place before the high school will be ready to go One-to-One, but they are hopeful for a rollout for the 2020-2021 school year. “The faculty have asked to have more [professional development] around it. We need to make sure the infrastructure of the high school can support all of that, and we need to make sure that we [have somebody in house, like a tech integrator,” explained Filippone.

She added that the school is also looking into learning management systems, which would condense the many different platforms into one unified system for all teachers and students. For example, instead of some teachers using a Google Classroom, while others posting homework on Moodle, a learning management system would combine all of these tools into one site. “If everyone is going to have a computer, I’d like to have some consistency for kids to have similar learning management systems,” said Filippone, concluding, “those things would, ideally, come into place before everyone has a computer.”

As not only a science teacher at ORHS, but also a strong proponent of having One-to-One at the high school, Celeste Best has begun planning the high school’s rollout based on the process conducted at the middle school. She acknowledged the importance of learning from other schools, notably the middle school, when preparing for the future trade in. “We have to be ready to start to think about how to change our teaching to prepare kids,” said Best, who not only wants to make sure students are college and career ready, but also prepared for the additional integration of technology.

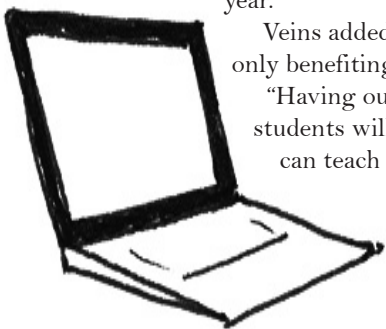
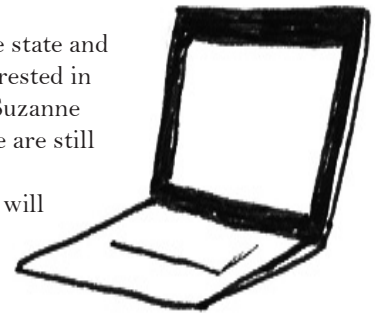
Echoing the middle school faculty, Filippone said, “I get excited about the possibilities for kids and teachers in the classroom.” She elaborated, “I think the benefit will be that there are students that don’t necessarily have that technology [right now]. Now, everybody will be starting at the same point.”

Despite the excitement about the transition, there are a number of problems that high school is addressing before moving forward. The current class of eighth graders will be the first to enter high school with experience with One-to-One. However, with the program not beginning at the high school until after the 2019 school year, the school board is faced with a question: should next year’s freshman class continue using One-to-One while the rest of the grades continue with the current set up at ORHS, or should the class switch back to the previous system?

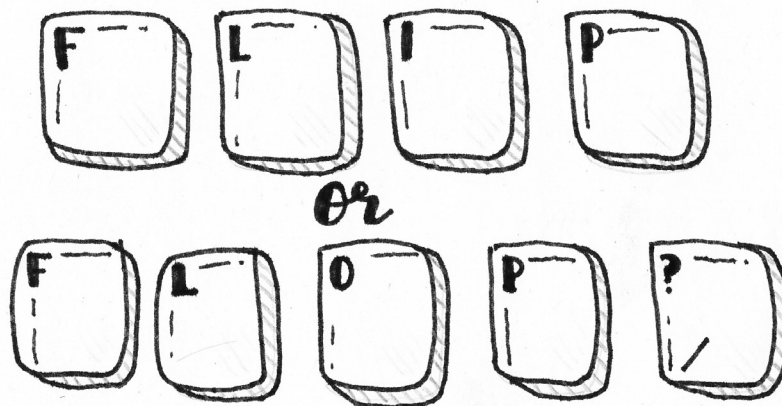
Filippone stated that the students coming from the Barrington School District created a similar dilemma for the school. When Barrington Middle School went One-to-One, students coming into ORHS no longer had access to the resources they previously had. Filippone addressed this issue, saying, “we are currently having those discussions about what would be the best situations for those eighth graders coming up to ninth grade because we have heard a lot of discussion about how they’ve adapted to having [One-to-One] and what it would be like for to not have it.” The decision will be finalized closer to the end of this year’s school year.

Veins added that the hope of One-to-One is to prepare students for the future. “Personally, I think that we’re only benefiting kids if we’re equipping them with a school issued device.”

“Having our kids have access to these tools is a little bit more of an accurate reflection of the world that our students will live in when they leave school,” explained Bellows. He added, “by having access to the tools, we can teach them how to use them most effectively and responsibly.” **M**



- Jordan Zercher
Artwork by Charlotte Hambucken



As the bell rings, Celeste Best's biology students filter into their seats. Best works her way around the classroom, checking each students' notes. For homework, every student was assigned a short video to watch and take notes on. The video was made by Best in advance. Providing students the opportunity to learn new content before they arrive to class. Within five minutes, the students have dispersed, and now are working in groups on a hands-on activity. This style of teaching is an example of a flipped classroom, using online lessons as a main teaching tactic in class.

Flipped lessons, or "flipping". Is a educational strategy that takes the traditional methods of teaching and turns it upside down. Instead of teaching in a traditional lecture style, flip lessons bring the lectures to students' homes. These lectures are in the form of video lessons, allowing students to then use class time for hands-on experiences, working through problems, and practicing the material. Flip Lesson also provide the opportunity for students to go back and review teacher's exact lessons when preparing for assessments. Flip lessons are becoming increasingly popular across the country including at Oyster River High School, where multiple teachers have adopted them into their classrooms. As the high school works its way to One-to-One, technology integrated education will become more prominent in classrooms.

These flipped lessons are used in place of traditional lectures and are equivalent to a compressed lecture that would be given in a single class period. Students watch these short videos and take notes as homework. The videos have definitions, examples, pictures, graphs, and everything that would be presented by a teacher in a "normal" lecture. Along with the visual elements of the lesson, the teacher's voice aids the students through the new content. Students have the ability to pause the videos whenever they see fit to write down information or rewind to clarify. Flip lessons let students arrive to class the next day with their notes done, giving teachers more time to explore topics in greater depth.

"It's called flip because you flip traditional thoughts. Instead of me going over vocabulary words, definitions, or low level Bloom's Taxonomy stuff, the kids do that at home. They take the notes of what would have been a traditional lecture and when they come to class, we do the practice, the application, the evaluation, the comprehension

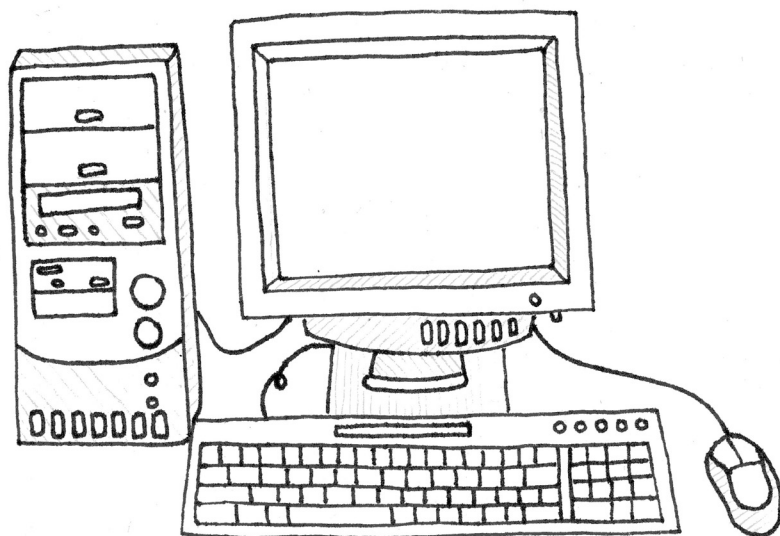
levels of Bloom's Taxonomy," said Best, a teacher at Oyster River High School.

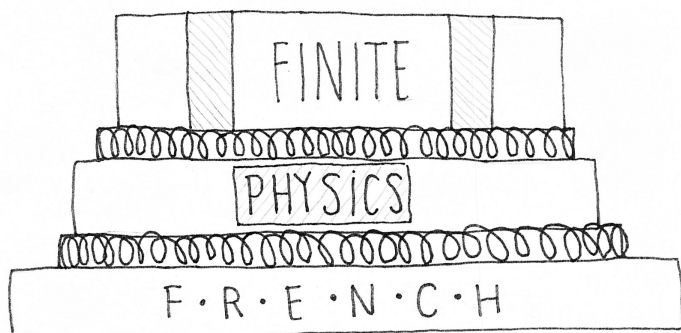
As mentioned by Best, Bloom's Taxonomy is a classification tool of various levels of educational learning objectives. Flipped lessons allow for more time to focus on the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, such as the analysis, evaluation, and creation of content in-class. There are six levels to the taxonomy that equate to increasing levels of acquired knowledge. Bloom's taxonomy is used as a tool by educators to evaluate the content understood by students.

Before she transitioned to flip teaching, Best said that she found herself spending more than half of a 50 minute class lecturing and giving notes. Now that she uses flips, "it erases two or three days a week that used to be lecture and is now hands on." Best also has more time for, "labs, practice, activities, and things that we didn't used to be able to get to."

Kathryn Cohen ('19), a student of Best, explained how learning in a flipped classroom allows for more hands on time in class. "More time is available in class overall, because the teacher no longer has to set aside time for notes," she said.

When students have the ability to do the flips at home, they come to class the following day with the basic information. "I definitely felt that they prepared me for the next class," said Sam Belanger ('19). Belanger agreed with Cohen when it came to the gained time in class to apply the





acquired knowledge from the flips. “You have more time to ask questions in class rather than spending the whole class period listening to a lesson,” said Belanger.

Jennifer Wainwright, a science teacher at ORHS, also uses flipped lessons in her classroom. She uses them because, “students can go home and watch the notes. They can then come to class with questions and we can, as a group, work on answering questions and work on problems.”

Best agreed with Wainwright, saying, “it gives [students] the time in class, with me, with their classmates to work on the harder things; the discuss, the evaluate, the analyze.”

Flip lessons allow students to work through problems with the teachers instead of at home alone. “Students can ask questions in class when they don’t understand new topic, and get answers immediately, instead of sitting at home confused and frustrated,” said Cohen.

Despite the many positive aspects Flip lessons present, they are not always a preferred learning style of all students. “In flip notes, you are just getting those baseline definitions and for a lot of people, they need to see a few examples and have it explained a few times,” said Jane Spear (‘19).

Kyle Miller (‘20) agrees with Spear, saying, “I think teaching [lessons] in class is better because asking questions is really important to learning a new topic. When you are not able to ask questions, it really takes away from learning the unit.” Some students enjoy the traditional teaching style because of the interaction between the student and teacher. Spear added that, “there is an exchange between students and teachers when a class isn’t flipped.”

Flip lessons are more conducive with the traditional teaching of math and science classes. “Math and science are definitely easier to switch to a flip classroom but other classes you can do it it just takes more creativity and it wouldn’t be all the time. You would want to think about where can I save time that’s more meaningful to be with my students,” said Best.

With flip lessons, students always have access to the teacher’s lessons and can always revisit them. When studying for tests or summative assessments students can go back and review the flip lessons as a studying tool, “it’s very helpful to be able to go back and use them as a study tool. They definitely helped me study for tests and quizzes,” said Belanger.

“If I can eliminate the time of me standing in front of the classroom talking at the class and be able to work around meeting with each student to help them get over that sticking point before they go home, why not?” she said.

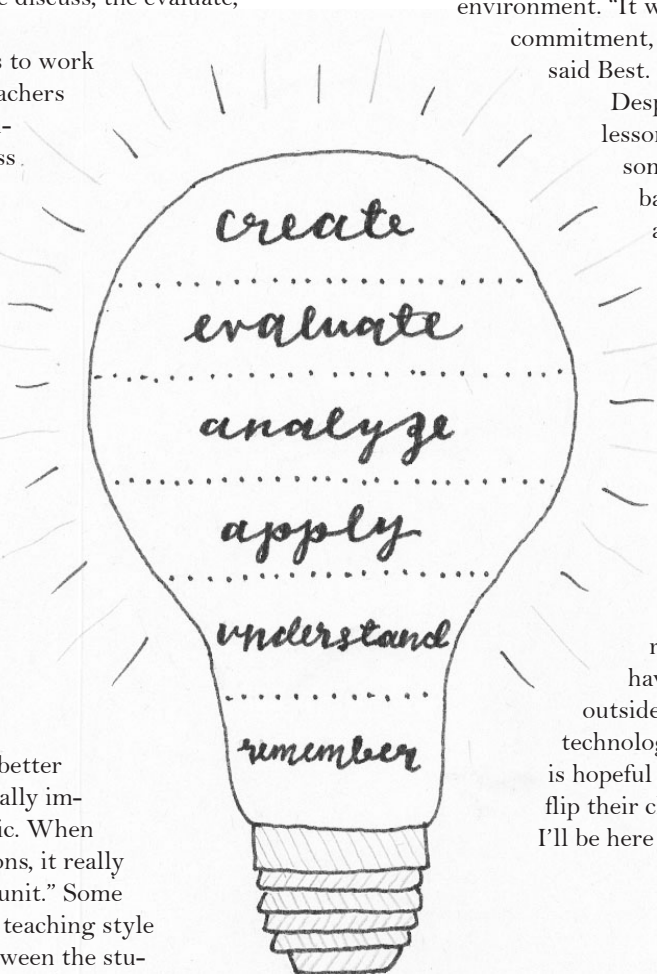
Creating flipped lessons and activities creates more time out of class that a teachers need to prepare. A large reason teachers don’t elect to flip their classrooms is the time commitment of transitioning the classroom to a flip environment. “It was a five year progression. It’s a commitment, but a commitment that I made,” said Best.

Despite the positive aspects of flip lessons from an educator standpoint, some teachers elect not to use them based on some students lack of access to technology. Wainwright can see the perspective of the other students. “If students don’t have access to [technology]... if they don’t have internet or computers, they lose the [main] portion of the flip,” she said.

With the high school beginning its journey to becoming One-to-One, in the upcoming years students will be provided with a laptop. This resolves the issue of students not having access to the flip lessons outside of school. As the amount of technology in the building increases, Best is hopeful that more teachers will elect to flip their classrooms, saying, “I hope so, and I’ll be here to help.” **M**

– Joe Morrell

Artwork by Mia Loureiro



Extended Learning Opportunities

the Coolidge Company, a Dover-based construction company. He stated, “I’m looking to get into the trade so working in construction is very helpful. It gives me that advantage that I wouldn’t have. I’m getting an extra six months before I have to get into the field as a full-time employee.”

He also said, “they’re basically educating me on kind of how they do things there and how that company is run, and then the opportunity is there to kind of roll into them full time into the summer. So, it’s great for a student like me who’s not necessarily looking to go to college but looking to get more into the trade industry.” This apprenticeship also gives him the opportunity to

build a relationship with the people at the company and get on-the-job experience.

Additionally, Donovan said that as someone who knows what they want to do, and isn’t plan-

ning on attending college, “it would be difficult for me to sit in a classroom all day when I know I could be doing something that’s

Bored of traditional classes? Looking to get more experience in a particular field? Want to get a head start on college courses? If you can dream it, you can probably get credit for it.

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) allow students, primarily juniors and seniors, to gain experience in a field of interest, take classes offered outside of the high school, or get credit for non-traditional learning experiences. The program was created in the 2017-18 school year, and Sean Peschel was hired to help students find and get credit for opportunities beyond the classroom. Before Peschel, students were able to do independent studies, internships, online classes, and classes outside of ORHS, but since then, Peschel has been working on making these opportunities more widely available and more extensive, as well as giving more control to the student.

ELOs include advanced, parent structured, or independent coursework, internships, apprenticeships, classes at UNH or Great Bay Community College, online classwork, and classes through the career technical program at other high schools. According to Peschel, there were 26 ELOs completed at the end of last school year including independent studies, internships, and other non-class-based learning. At this point in the school year there are 41 ELOs in process.

Peschel also remarked that he’d seen a shift in the objectives of the students who were seeking ELOs. “Last year, [students] wanted to expand what they’re doing,” meaning that most students doing ELOs wanted “to go above and beyond and do extra.” Whereas, “this year students [that seek ELOs] want to enhance what they’re doing,” or they want to go more in depth in a specific area of interest.

Among those who are focusing on their particular area of interest is Ryan Donovan (’19). Donovan is an apprentice for



A group of students collaborate at the Youth Climate Leaders Academy.

going to educate me further in what I’m interested in.”

Similar to Donovan’s experience, 12 students at Oyster River are working to gain knowledge through real world application with the pilot program for ACE (Architecture – Construction – Engineering) NH. The students are working on the renovation at Moharimet Elementary School. For more information about the program, see Owen Tonkin’s article about the ACE NH program on the MOR website.

Although career-track learning is one useful outcome of the ELO program, others are using it to follow their interests or get credit for doing something they care about. Several members of the Sustainability Club started an ELO after they attended a two-day retreat called the Youth Climate Leadership Academy in November of 2018, where they learned about tools to help with their mission for sustainability. For more information about the

retreat check out Alana Ervin's article on the website.

According to Jackson Deely, a member of the Sustainability Club and participant in the ELO, their goal is to, "get rid of single-use plastics in the cafeteria [including] water-bottles, the cups for smoothies, all the utensils, [and] containers they use for sandwiches. We just want to basically, replace all of that with sustainable stuff, because everyday there's just a bunch of waste coming from that and it's kind of unnecessary."

Deely explained, while this may not become a career, "I'm really interested in this kind of thing, and I really like having the option to do something related to it that's also through the school, cause it is really hard to do stuff outside of school. And it's nice to have a group of people that are also like-minded in doing this."

Before Peschel took the job as the ELO Coordinator, opportunities like the one Deely is a part of may have been difficult or impossible to get credit for or find out about. Charlie Haskell ('19) was enrolled in an online American Sign Language class before the ELO program and wanted to get school credit for it. "Before the ELO department, it was really difficult to get anything done," she explained. Because counseling had so many other jobs, it was difficult to dedicate time and resources to helping students find and get credit for non-traditional classes.

Because Haskell wasn't allowed to go to the library every day during her study hall to do class work due to a school rule limiting the number of times students can go to the school library during study hall in a week, she had to be dismissed from school to walk to the Durham Public Library, missing advisory, her study hall, and lunch. Haskell remarked, "I think it would've gone a lot better had the ELO department been established back then."

Ian Moore ('19) has taken and is in the process of taking several first year level classes at UNH through the Challenging Academically Talented Students (CATS) program. While the CATS program has long been an option for ORHS students, it's still good for students looking to pursue interests or get ahead.

Like Donovan, Moore found the ELO program helpful for transitioning out of high school. He explained he chose to take classes at UNH because he could've graduated at the end of his junior year but decided not to because he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. "This year for me is kind of like a transition [...] from high school into college." He explained, "[it feels like] I'm



A group of Oyster River students at the Youth Climate Leaders Academy.

not really in high school. [...] and I know what to expect when I get into college." Moore said that he would recommend the CATS program because, "you get a ton of free periods from it, so you kind of lack some school. Also, if you're looking to go to college after high school, it's super affordable to get some credits out of the way and to feel out the college environment without actually diving full into it."

Haskell, who also took a Spanish class at UNH, stated, "I would [recommend UNH classes] as long as it's something you're genuinely passionate about and you've already exhausted all your opportunities at the school." She explained, "I would utilize your at-school opportunities, because it's really hard with your schedule and just generally physically and emotionally exhausting to have to leave school [...] and have to walk across UNH campus and miss a lot of your day."

Kaycie Kustra ('20) is taking Auto Collision 1 at Dover High School because she hopes to follow in her father's footsteps in joining the autobody world. This class will help her receive her ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) Certification.

She said that if someone were considering taking classes at Dover they should "just go for it. The worst that happens is that you drop out of it at any point." She explained, "it gets you a lot of the certifications you need, and it really puts your name out there in the industry. [...] We spend a lot of time talking to the local dealerships, and they eventually learn your name, so it's kind of helpful when you want to go get a job, more people know you."

Kustra explained, "I get to spend half the day doing what I want to do and doing something that I actually love to do, rather than just sitting behind a desk." **M**

-Susanna Serrano

Photos courtesy of Alana Ervin and the DHS Autobody Instagram account



Signed Out

"May I use the restroom?"

"Can I go to the bathroom?"

"¿Puedo ir al baño?"

"Puis-je utiliser la salle de bain?"

As students, asking permission to use the restroom, get a drink of water, or visit the school nurse has become a natural part of the school day. At Oyster River High School, students have long held the freedom to leave class with their teacher's discretion, walking the halls without a hall pass or permission slip.

However, with questions arising regarding student safety and accountability, especially in cases of emergency, the school is faced with answering the question: how much freedom is too much?

According to Heather Machanoff, the ORCSD Director of Counseling, "there's no written policy [regarding students' ability to leave the classroom], but there's procedure within the building." Beginning in early February, teachers and faculty have begun to implement a system which requires students to sign out when they leave the classroom. Additionally, students are expected to use passes when moving to and from the counseling office, health office, or main office. Although some students have expressed irritation with the change, Machanoff clarified that "the system that has been put into place hasn't been made to limit visits, but instead to track traveling to and from those places." Sign-out sheets keep record of the date and time a student spent outside of the classroom and the reason for their departure. "The ability for us to hold students accountable and make sure we're doing what we need to do as educators is hard to do without some kind of system," explained Machanoff. "Systems can cause angst, but they can also streamline things to make them manageable."

Kim Wolph, the school nurse at Oyster River High School, further explained the importance of signing out, saying, "all of the faculty and staff here are accountable for the students' whereabouts during the school day. It is our duty to hold students accountable as to where they are supposed to be."

Mike McCann, assistant principal at Oyster River High School, is a member of the Multi-Tiered Support Services (MTSS) leadership team, a team dedicated to improving student learning and tracking student growth, which contributed to the new policy. He weighed in on the issues, saying, "one of the reasons why we moved in this direction has to do with student accountability. There are liability issues around knowing where students are, but a bigger part of it has to do with our MTSS

team. We talked a lot about how to help students take more ownership over when they're leaving a classroom and being more aware of the time."

McCann also stressed the idea of creating a clear expectation to avoid confusion or frustration. "We're trying to make it more uniform across the school. When rules and guidelines are consistent throughout the school, it's easier for them to function because they know what to expect. It's difficult when there are different rules in every single classroom you go to," said McCann.

This new policy has set the stage for larger scale conversation on this issue. Although sign-out sheets address the issue of student accountability and whereabouts, the ability for students to be permitted to leave in the first place remains unclear. "It really depends on the teacher," explained Katherine Discoe ('22), referring to students' ability to leave class.

Madeline Marshall ('22) agreed, further explaining the differences between teacher's viewpoints and experiences. "Some of my teachers are used to dealing with seniors who leave for like thirty minutes at a time and they get mad and don't let me leave because they think I'm going to do the same thing, but that's not the case."

In addition to issues of accountability of students for long periods of time, the growing popularity of

vaping has also changed the way some faculty view the bathroom. According to "This High School Is Locking Down Most of Its Bathrooms to Stop Students from Vaping" by Vice News, some high schools have begun to take drastic measures against vaping, which sometimes occurs in school bathrooms. "Not only is it a safety and health concern for those vaping, but it is also a safety concern for the rest of the students. Other students are reporting that they are scared to go to the washrooms because of the students who are frequently vaping there," said Deneka Michaud, a school board spokeswoman from a North Vancouver high school, in an email to Vice News.

ORHS student Clara* saw parallels between the nationwide issue and Oyster River, saying, "juuling is definitely an issue in



"Regardless what you're doing - using the bathroom, getting a drink, or just taking a minute - we should be able to have that opportunity to leave if [something is] getting in the way of our learning."

-Phofolos

bathrooms at Oyster River.” Clara described how using the bathroom can often be uncomfortable when some students use the space to vape. “Once, I was trying to change and I walked into a bathroom and two girls were in a stall together juuling and talking, so I left right away,” she explained.

Despite concerns of vaping, some students believe that briefly leaving class is important for students’ learning. “When you realize you’re getting bored or dissociated from a class and you can’t pay attention, having a chance to get out, take a break, and reset your brain is important,” said Demetrius Phofolos (‘19). “Regardless what you’re doing - using the bathroom, getting a drink, or just taking a minute - we should be able to have that opportunity to leave if [something is] getting in the way of our learning,” he continued.

Kara Sullivan, English teacher at ORHS, agreed that giving students the opportunity to briefly leave is important, saying, “I absolutely think that ‘taking a break’ is essential. However, it is all about timing. Most students are great about timing. They often ask, ‘is this a good time to go to the bathroom or get a drink?’ This is never a problem,” said Sullivan. “Honestly, it is more about students who ask to go to the bathroom and then leave class for ten minutes. I can’t leave class to figure out where they are going, and sometimes they are hanging out in the core,” she added.

Sullivan also brought up the issue of students missing material when they are leaving class for extended periods of time. “Students will sometimes come to class and sit until class starts and then ask to go to the bathroom just as I get the class started. I find myself repeating information to individuals,” she said. Sullivan explained that the current issues that arise from students’ time away from class could be improved by the new use of sign-out sheets. “I think the passes will help to keep students focused on what the break is for. A quick break and then back to class to focus,” she said.

Phofolos agreed, adding that sign-out sheets could also ensure that every student has the opportunity to take a break. Phofolos explained how in the past he has noticed differences in which students are permitted to leave the classroom, saying, “I feel like some students get targeted more for leaving to use the bathroom based on if they are doing well in the class or their reputation as a kid,” explained Phofolos. “I don’t think that’s fair because I think everybody deserves at least a little bit of time during class to take a break and unwind.”

Madeleine Triff (‘20), agreed that all students should have access to the same resources, but is skeptical of the impact sign-out sheets will have on this issue. “Personally, I think it’s unfair that because a few people did something wrong that everyone has to be punished for it. However, it’s not a major inconvenience

- it’s just writing your time down when you leave and get back,” she said. Despite Triff not having much personal issue with the policy, she expressed doubt that the system would change much. “Some students still don’t sign out and just leave and some teachers just don’t care,” said Triff. “I think it’s important for classes to keep track of attendance and I get why it’s necessary, but I’m not sure it’s solving the issue in all classes,” she added.

Although the sign-out sheets and passes remain a new aspect of Oyster River’s expectations, a student’s ability to request to leave class has been consistently relevant. Since some students have conditions that require them to take time away from class, Wolph, the school nurse, explained the importance of permission to leave. “My personal opinion is that if someone asks to use the restroom, that [request] should be honored,” she said. “However, if a teacher notices that every period at a

certain time, a student asks to use the bathroom, and they have some concern about it, the teacher would hopefully reach out to either myself or to the student’s parent to figure out if this is justified or if it is an avoidance of class during that time frame.”

Wolph also stressed the importance of communication between students, teachers, and faculty. “Coming from a medical perspective, I know what diagnoses students have. So [a request to leave] could be completely warranted,” she added.

McCann added that sign-out sheets and passes are beneficial in helping bridge communication between students and faculty. “They allow [teachers] to feel more comfortable letting a student leave because they know where they are going.”

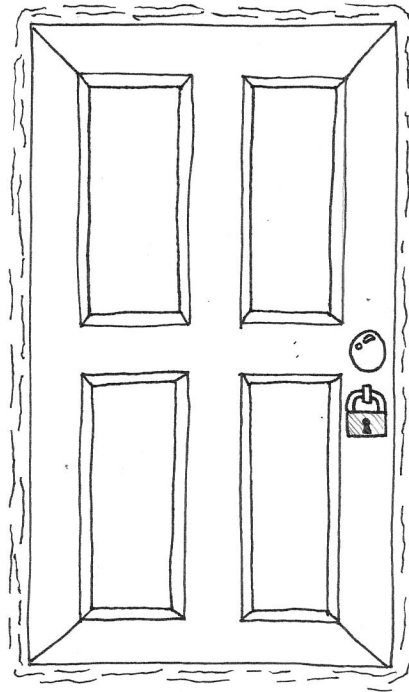
Additionally, keeping track of where students are during certain time periods can help them to stay on top of their workload in the future. “If you’re gone during an important part of instruction, even though it could be perfectly legitimate, you may need to make up that time during Flex,” he said, adding that sign-out sheets can be an important

part of identifying when a student may need to make up work or pursue extra help.

Finally, Wolph added that any changes to school policy regarding sign-out sheets and passes are made to benefit the students, saying, “this isn’t about denying resources for students. We want everyone to get the service that they need at that time, whether it’s to make it to counseling or the health office or other facilities, regardless of physical diagnosis. It’s about making sure that everyone is as safe as they can be on school premises.” **M**

“It’s about making sure that everyone is as safe as they can be on school premises.”

-Wolph



-Alana Ervin

Artwork by Mia Loureiro



Instagram



The Pressure Behind the Post

The cursor blinks monotonously up at you. A prized photo needs an even better caption. A witty comment jumps to mind and your thumbs rapidly jot it down before you hit the arrow and send your latest photo into the world. Refresh, refresh, refresh. Two likes in two minutes. Not good enough. Your followers aren't nearly as impressed with you as you had hoped. You hit delete before anyone else can see your embarrassment of a post.

With over one billion users worldwide, Instagram has quickly become one of the most popular social networking platforms since its launch in 2010. What once began as a playful, creative way to connect with friends has steadily morphed into a massive media platform. Today, the app creates new career opportunities, groundbreaking means of marketing, activism outlets, and other undeniably positive experiences. Devan McClain's article "A Better Side to Instagram" highlights many of these pros. But even with these encouraging aspects of Instagram comes an even higher standard to be at the top of your "Instagram game." As followers add up, so does the pressure to show off the best version of yourself, even if it's a completely unrealistic one. After all, if you're going to let so many people into your "life," why wouldn't you want to show them your best one?

First comes the tedious game of earning more and more followers to create the idea of status. Then comes with the task of posting content that creates the perfect first impression of yourself. "I feel pressure to put my face forward and not just in the traditional 'put out the photo you look the best in,' but to uphold a reputation. I post less and less, because what I post has to be okay for 1,000 people to see," says Emma Hilary Gould ('19), an Instagram user since 2012.

You're scrolling through your feed and stumble upon a new account. You click on the profile and are welcomed into their feed. With over 60,000 followers, the person that smiles brightly back up to you has clear skin, consistently perfect hair days, the most popular clothes, and seems to always be on vacation. Their feed as a whole looks like a curated museum of their life and every picture compliments the next. You swoon over the idea of this person's life as you click back to your own profile and are severely underwhelmed by your own. You delete that picture at your friend's birthday, and the landscape photo that didn't quite get enough likes in attempt to clean up your feed and in turn, "clean up" your life.

"I think there's a lot of pressure in general to have a good

looking social media page. It's almost a competition. I try not to compare myself to others but it's hard when there are so many out there. I constantly remind myself that a social media page is not the real portrayal of someone's life. No one wants to show their lows to the world," says Instagram user Jackie Settele.

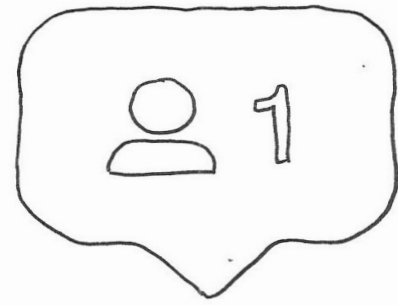
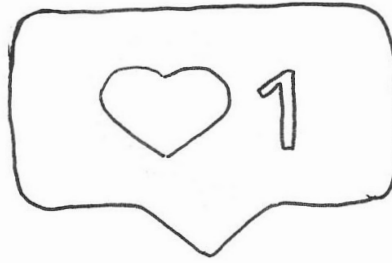
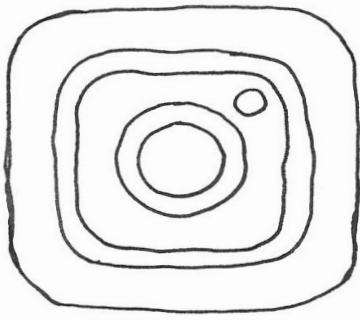
As Instagram grows in popularity, a rising pressure and anxiety settles on user by user. In early 2017, the Royal Society for Public Health conducted a survey of almost 1,500 fourteen to twenty four year olds from across the UK, asking them to score how each of the social media platforms impact several health and wellbeing-related issues. Instagram scored the lowest and most negative. Instagram is linked to anxiety and depression, and it's easy to see why. The photos of those you follow that show up on your feed are just begging you to compare yourself with other people's content, editing skills, friendships, vacations, looks and overall life. When you post you're letting each of your followers in, whether you know them or not.

Suddenly, you're only sharing that photo if it matches the color scheme of the rest of your feed. You only post between 6pm and 10pm to optimize your likes. "My logic is that usually people are out at work or school during the day and at night they catch up to look at their social media, so that's when the most people are online," explains Settele. You abide by the "follow less people than follow you" rule like it's the law to prove your popularity, and when you go out, you're scanning the room for any photo op because "pics or it didn't happen."

As a fellow Instagram user, Reed Leader ('20) notices the subliminal competition from account to account from a distance. "I see people caring so much about their feed and I think it's stupid. It takes over people's lifestyle. If they go to the beach they're so focused on getting the best picture with their friends instead of spending time in the moment." Leader chooses to share photos to show people what he's up to or things he likes, rather than for the sole purpose of likes and aesthetics.

The pressure to present oneself in a certain way comes from all angles. It trickles down from celebrities and influencers, with their professional grade photos that "inspire" you to want to achieve the unattainable. It swells as you compare your friends' accounts to your own, whether it's in follower count or in the content they post and the life they lead. Gould





comments, “since Instagram is the one thing you can curate to look exactly how you want it to look, there’s a feeling of ‘why wouldn’t you?’”

And so while Instagram is a groundbreaking tool in social connectivity, it also becomes a breeding ground for a lot of unhealthy behaviors. With nearly 7,000 followers and counting, Isabelle Todd posts a variety of content, some of which includes sponsored brand deals.

Todd considers herself in, “the minor of minor leagues as far as Instagram influencing,” but that’s how she likes it. “I think a lot of people don’t feel comfortable admitting that something as pathetic as Instagram can make them feel stress, anxiety and question their own confidence but it’s actually really common,” says Todd, who says that she too used to care way too much about Instagram.

“I think the biggest thing is that, when you start to feel like that, to just take a step back and realize really how laughable it is to feel insecure over something as trivial and as a specific Instagram post, comment, or account. I think that becoming obsessive with something like Instagram is a symptom of being unhappy with some other aspect of your own life,” says Todd.

With a larger than average following, you would think the pressure of posting would be on, but Todd has been able to take a step back and look at the app use as a whole. She touches upon one of the most important things to remember when putting your life online: Instagram is only meant to highlight aspects of one’s life, not its entirety. “To my friends and people that know me, I am not the girl in the picture I posted where I am sitting perfectly on my family’s sailboat smiling, but rather the girl who, thirty seconds before that photo, slipped and fell and is laughing about it,” jokes Todd.

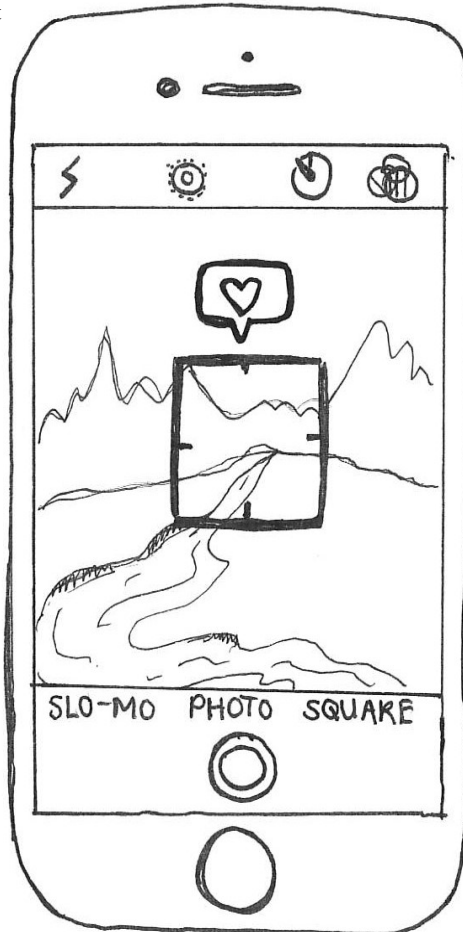
So while it’s true that we live in the digital age and that every day we are connecting with more and more people, what you and the people you follow share is truly just a representation of you and their best parts. “I have had so many people tell me that I am nothing like what I come off on Instagram and I think that I could easily get really offended by that but I honestly take that more as a compliment. I hope I am more real in real life!” says Todd.

And that’s just it. In real life, there are no filters, heavy saturations, or spot perfecting tools. You

are seen through more than just one frame at a time and it’s not always at the most flattering angle or where you look like you are loving every second of your life. Your Instagram profile isn’t capturing those days where you sit at home in sweats doing nothing extraordinary and it’s important to realize that that goes for your friends, followers, and professional influencers you follow. Getting caught up in the measuring your highs to other people’s lows and your lows to other people’s highs will always be a losing game.

Todd offers one last piece of advice: “Instagram isn’t real life and it never will be. It’s a lot more fulfilling being happy with your actual life then with your Instagram account. Be more concerned with why you are upset over not getting a certain amount of likes or followers rather than being upset over not getting that number of likes or followers.” **M**

—Grace Castonguay
Artwork by Chloe Jackson





Instagram



Living Beyond the Profile



Looking at a better side of social media

As someone who grew up during the rise of social media, Grace Castonguay's "The Pressure Behind the Post" article hit close to home. Comparing yourself to someone else is never easy, especially when sites like Instagram allow for users to find thousands of accounts in the blink of an eye. With these comparisons, came the subsequent pressure to live a "perfect life," and there were numerous times when I considered deleting my online one altogether.

Other callouts against social media often point to its lack of substance, drawing attention to the opportunities it gives users to waste time while mindlessly scrolling. These callouts seem to be growing in number as social media expands, with 320 million accounts being registered between the months of September 2017 and October 2018 alone, according to the United States Census Bureau. This means that a profile was created approximately every ten seconds over these 13 months.

While this number may seem large, it represents less than one tenth of all internet-based accounts. Totalling at around 3.4 billion world-wide users, there is no doubt that social media has become a normalized part of life, for better or for worse.

However, in the midst of hearing all the discussion around social media's seemingly bad reputation, I was struck with a question: could Instagram be used for good?

The immediate answer seems to be yes.

In a survey of over one hundred 10-12th graders with social media accounts at Oyster River High School, over seventy percent reported that they saw social media making a positive impact within their communities.

Social media user Tyler O'Connell ('19) spoke to this trend, noting, "I've seen social media be used to help cover medical bills through sites like GoFundMe, people posting fundraisers for organizations through Facebook on their birthdays, and other support for events like a Polar Plunge fundraising for the Special Olympics."

O'Connell herself encountered fundraising through social media back in 2014 with the introduction of the "Ice Bucket Challenge."

This viral trend involved participants dousing themselves with buckets of ice water to raise money and awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). The result was thousands of posted videos that raised over 115 million dollars for research and diagnostic treatment for those with ALS, which included providing most of the funds that later led to the discovery of the responsible NEK1 gene, according to "The 'Ice Bucket Challenge' Helped Scientists Discover a New Gene Tied to ALS," by the New York Times.

"I think the fact that [the Ice Bucket Challenge] was created and ran through social media was what allowed it to be successful," said O'Connell. "The fact that it went viral so quickly showed that social media could be used for good, or at least used to try to raise awareness for a serious disease."

Alongside encouraging her participation in the Ice Bucket Challenge, social media also encouraged O'Connell to try fundraising for herself. "I participated in the Polar Plunge for Special Olympics with my advisory last February, which involved a lot of fundraising through Facebook. I think this allowed our groups' efforts to raise money to reach a wider audience, as well as to raise awareness for the Special Olym





Instagram



pics and encourage other people to plunge as well.”

Through Facebook, O’Connell and her team ended up raising close to two thousand dollars for Special Olympics, and they are planning to revamp their efforts and online presence this year. O’Connell noted that social media will be a big part of this, saying, “I think social media will continue to help us spread even more awareness and reach a bigger audience, which makes campaigns like this more successful.”

Social media can also be an important tool for marketing, as is the case for current New York University student Olivia Kelly. As the owner of a repurposed clothing account called @Garmentfindz, Kelly was drawn to using Instagram as her business’ only platform due to its widespread reach. “I chose to advertise Garmentfindz on Instagram because of the site’s popularity among my peers. I knew I’d be able to reach a lot of people, and that it would be easy.”

As well as recognizing Instagram for being an effective reach tool within her age group, Kelly also enjoys spreading the messages behind the pieces of clothing that she produces. “I was inspired to start repurposing and selling because I really believe that thrifting is the best way to buy clothing. Thrifting reduces consumerism via recycling, which is not only good for the environment, but allows patrons to dress uniquely and creatively.”

Social media has additionally given Kelly the opportunity to make new connections that she wouldn’t have been able to otherwise. “So many small businesses have taken off after starting with just an Instagram page. It really is the easiest way to connect with people, and you can get a feel of the business by just looking at their Instagram page. It’s so cool, and I’m so glad I chose to start up my business this way,” she said.

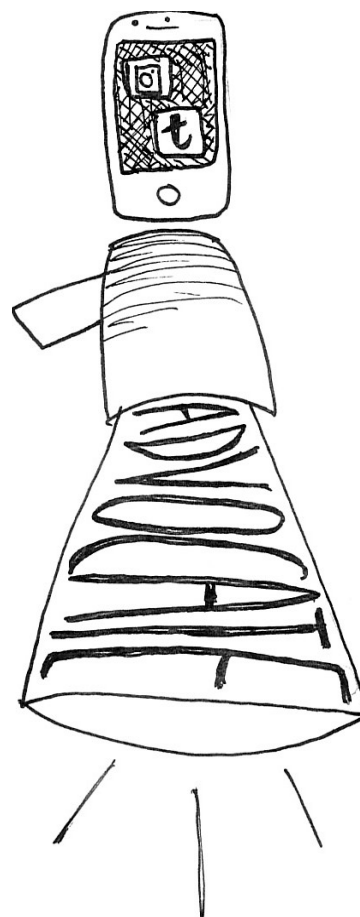
Connecting with others was also one of the driving forces behind Amy Jancey’s (’20) decision to start using her own social media platforms for sharing facts and tips about veganism, which highlights another opportunity that social media allows for: activism. “I love using social media to talk about issues such as [veganism] because nearly everyone has an account. It allows me to post something quickly and with minimal effort,” said Jancey. Being a vegan has since become a huge part of Jancey’s life, as explored further in a *Mouth of the River* profile by Carola Davis.

In fact, Jancey noted that she wouldn’t have even been inspired to try veganism if she had not learned about it through social media. “I love following other people who are passionate about various subjects on Instagram and other platforms. If some of my friends had never informed me about what eating meat can really cause, I would probably still be eating animals today,” she said. “Now, I want to start a dialogue around a topic that is so easily ignored by using my own platforms.”

Like Kelly, Jancey believes that social media is key towards

helping her spread her message, saying, “I definitely believe that social media helps me reach a broader audience. One post has the potential to reach hundreds of people whereas, in real life, I may only talk to half of those people.”

As mentioned by Jancey, accessibility of social media has made it one of the most effective marketing and reach tools to date. And with the growing number of active accounts, the opportunities for fundraising, activism efforts, and business management are only multiplying. “The benefit of all viral campaigns is the sheer number of people who can see them,” said O’Connell. “Social media users can also take advantage of their influence to reach more people and help give legitimacy to a cause, which is unique in and of itself.” **M**



- Devan McClain

Artwork by Demetrius Phofolos and Chloe Jackson



Mind OVER Mass

When you picture a basketball player, what do you see? Perhaps a lanky, lean muscled man, whose height puts him at the perfect level to dunk. What about a distance runner? Maybe it's a toned, lightweight woman with quick, defined legs. Try a gymnast - stinky, powerful, strong. It's common to assign a body type to an athlete, and an athlete to a body type, especially when you hear comments like, "you have the legs of a cyclist," or, "those broad shoulders would make for a great swimmer." But when sports are, by nature, so reliant on the body, it's easy to define yourself by how you size up in comparison to what "the best" should theoretically look like.

Growing up, I was always moving. With a rock climber for a mother and a New England Wrestling Champion for a father, my parents passed on their love for all things outdoors and athletic. By the time I was 8, I had done gymnastics, tried ballet, loved to rock climb, learned to ski, played soccer, ran 5ks, and hiked nearly all the 4,000 footers. I was athletic, adventurous, and healthy.

It was at this time too, that I also noticed the size of my thighs. Years of sports and coming from two naturally mesomorphic (a body type defined as having the ability to easily build muscle) parents, my thighs were muscular. Genetically, I put on muscle very easily, so it shouldn't have been a surprise when constantly climbing mountains and running around the soccer field grew me strong, defined legs - but to 8 year old me, they just looked big and I didn't like them.

I grew up, and my insecurities grew with me. Going into freshman year of high school, I quit soccer and joined cross country. I loved the team and the sport. My work ethic and competitive drive propelled me into varsity races. I yearned for that Top 7 title and the pride of being one of the fastest on the team. I was fixated on my goals and nothing would slow down my ambition - until I had a coach tell me that I, "didn't look like the rest of the varsity girls."

My coach wasn't trying to be unkind, and neither was he wrong. The muscle in my thighs made them about twice the size of most of the varsity girls, and I was taller than most of them too, but the statement crushed me nonetheless. This state of mind, of feeling like you are *literally* not built to succeed, affects many athletes. "It can be hard when everyone else around you looks a certain way. If you lose your passion for

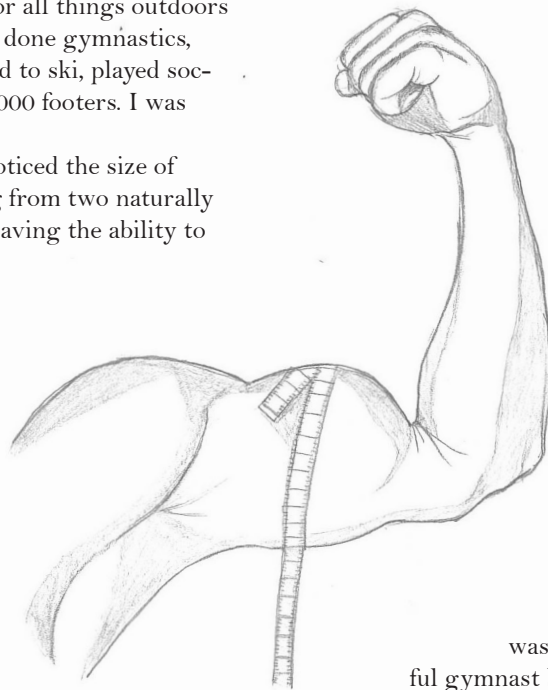
the sport because of feeling insecure, it can hurt all aspects of the sport," says Skylar Jones*, an ex gymnast of 13 years. This mindset can leave any kind of athlete, including myself, feeling defeated out of the starting gate.

Kyle Landrigan ('19) is a varsity basketball player at ORHS and experienced the feeling himself as a freshman. "I was pretty intimidated by everyone around me. One, because I was younger than everyone else and two, because I wasn't as developed as everyone else." Landrigan describes his freshman self as a, "tall, skinny kid that didn't really fit into his body yet." He confesses that if he could put on 25 more pounds of muscle, he believes he could be playing at a higher level today, but his natural build has made this difficult. "I've tried different weight lifting programs, and eating right, eating a lot of protein and that just hasn't worked for me. It's just the way I'm built."

When the idea that being successful equates to looking one way becomes overbearing, it can take the joy out of athletics. Jones reflects on her own experiences with this, "I hurt my back when I was 14 and was out of training for a while. I also hit puberty, grew, filled out, and gained weight. My teammates remained stick thin and super short which made many skills easier for them, and while even if that wasn't the preconceived idea of a successful gymnast body, it was what was around me at the time, so it was really challenging not to compare myself to them." For me, running with varsity had once been a triumphant nod at my athleticism and hard work. After I became brutally aware of my own body, it felt more like an opportunity for me to stick out like a sore thumb.

The result of this pressure ends up creating a mindset that is often more restraining than the body ever was. "I was discouraged and unmotivated because I felt like it was out of my control. I let it upset me when I could have worked with the body I had instead of wishing I hadn't gone through puberty yet. It was definitely hard to watch them do strength skills that I could once do so effortlessly," Jones finishes.

Katelyn Ohashi, 21, was an Olympic hopeful gymnast, winning the American Cup in 2013 after years of intensive



Names have been changed for anonymity

childhood and adolescent training. As she rounded the corner of her teenage years and into her adult body, pressure about body image from fans and coaches came too. “I was told that it was embarrassing how big I’d become. I was compared to a bird that couldn’t fly,” Ohashi shared with *The Players Tribune*. With severe body image issues, as well as back and shoulder injuries, Ohashi dropped from the elite level to pursue gymnastics in a collegiate setting with hopes of finding happiness. She recently shared diary entries with the internet from her elite days, detailing the pressure behind athletes to look a certain way. “Ever since I made the team last year, I have felt pressure to live up to a certain standard, and fit the stereotypical body type of a gymnast... My coach believes that me messing up or falling is a result of me being too heavy.”

Even with bodies of all different shapes and sizes, it truly just comes down to how you define success. There may be such thing as the perfect gymnast but Ohashi recently went viral for her “perfect 10” floor routine and she’s not that cookie cutter gymnast. Success is success, no matter what body you reached it in and happiness and enjoyment in sports is not a “one size fits all.” I don’t look like the perfect runner, but that shouldn’t stop me from loving the process of putting in the miles, and rather only opens up more opportunities for newfound sports and passions to showcase what my body does really well. Jones adds, “I’m proud of my strong legs and the way I look. It’s definitely taken me time to feel confident in the body I have, but I wouldn’t trade it. I wouldn’t trade the 13 years of gymnastics for skinny legs or a smaller jean size.”

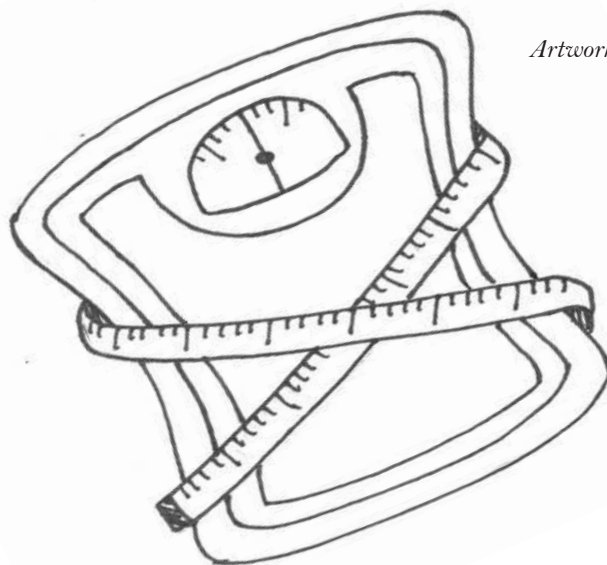
In the past, allowing stereotyped body images to distort the way I saw myself prevented me from applauding my strengths. My “build” may limit me in some fields, while it helps excel me in others. Just because I am not one type of athlete, does not mean I am not another. I am able to work with the strengths my body has given me, whether that means in different sports, training styles, or game plans. “I discovered that I can play the game my way and still succeed,” affirms Landrigan.

“One of the reasons I stopped dancing was because it got so tiring thinking so hard about what I looked like. There’s just no time that you’re not thinking about what you look like, especially when there’s a big, room length mirror in front of you.”
-Kelsey Wiles, former dancer of 6 years

“You don’t want to let down your team. It’s definitely mentally exhausting trying to stay away from food.”
-Noah Strout, wrestler of 9 years

“I had always felt like I had bigger, stronger legs, and for me that was an insecurity because other girls didn’t have those kind of legs and I did.”
-Julie Smith*, former gymnast of 13 years

It wasn’t until I was able to let go of my rooted ideas about what kind of body made a certain athlete successful that I was finally able to enjoy sports again. Try as I might, I will never be the lanky, slight runner that I see finishing in the top 10 and on the cover of *Runner’s World Magazine*. The way I look or don’t look does not measure my athleticism, and it should never hinder my ability to celebrate my strengths. Landrigan concluded by saying: “You can’t always look one way so you have to make the best of it. I play to my strengths as being this long, lanky, tall kid that can defend the ball and there are some guys that are short and quick and they use that to their advantage. You have to take what you have and use it.” **M**



-Grace Castonguay
Artwork by Madison Hoppler and Chloe Jackson

Unified Sports

A Profile on Unified Sports at Oyster River High School

“Unified sports establish foundations for young people to interact with individuals they might not normally interact with. It also allows the students that have disabilities to participate fully in sports and get respect without any sort of barrier,” said Kathleen Kelley, an Oyster River High School paraeducator and assistant coach of all unified sports teams.

Oyster River High School has seventeen New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) verified sports, with three of these being unified teams. Unified athletics are an opportunity that not all schools in New Hampshire provide, but the program presents valuable opportunities for the student body. Because of this, the program and the sports teams have significantly grown in numbers within the past few years at ORHS.

As of now, the unified team has a range of ten to eleven athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Along with this, the team is comprised of other student-athletes, who are referred to as partners. This year, there has been a record high of fifteen partners.

Sam Belanger ('19), who is one of these partners, has noticed this, saying: “ever since I started playing two years ago, involvement in unified has taken off. More and more students are choosing to be a part of it.”

This growth is evident with six new participants joining soccer and basketball since last year.

In hopes to see even more involvement, this spring's seasonal sport has been changed from track and field to volleyball. Andy Lathrop, the ORHS Athletic Director, expanded upon this, saying, “changing the spring sport to volleyball was due to the fact that there was not the participation in track that was expected and by changing it, we are hoping to see more numbers.”

More students have been getting involved because Oyster River's unified sports foster inclusive atmospheres and allow for the athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their partners to create meaningful relationships.

Hannah Proulx ('21) is one of the unified athletes and discussed her love of unified as, “having the opportunity to play with and connect with people with intellectual disabilities and people who don't have disabilities.”

Lathrop supported this statement, saying, “having unified has created this positive atmosphere, which has





** Some faces have been blurred for anonymity.**

contributed to school spirit and people showing genuine interest in other students and their interests, as well as interest in their lives.”

According to the Special Olympics’ website under the “Sports and Games” tab, unified sports is a nationwide program whose primary mission is inclusion. The website also noted that unified athletics are an integral part of Special Olympics USA and that there are 4,500 elementary, middle, and high schools in the country that have a unified program.

This mission of inclusion is evident at ORHS. As noted by Kelley, “the encouragement that is shown and the skills that the partners share teach the athletes how to improve. The comradery that has developed has also been unbelievable to witness.”

The program all started seven years ago when Steve Lord, a former special educator at ORHS, created the program (not to be confused with Stephen Lord, the former French teacher, who is profiled by Carola Davis in this current issue). After Lord retired, other paraeducators and faculty have continued his mission and have become involved. As of now, the head coach of all of the unified teams is Alexander Satterfield, a current special educator at ORHS.

Satterfield said that he started coaching and has continued to be involved because: “coaching unified aligns with my philosophy. I feel that offering unified sports gives everyone a unique opportunity to get outside of their bubble and experience part of their life differently.”

Alongside Satterfield, partner Kelsey McCrone (‘19) has participated in unified sports for the past two years. McCrone noted: “the reason that I continue to play unified sports is because the genuine relationships that I have built with the players are important to both me and the athletes.”

Similarly to McCrone, Belanger stated: “unified has been an incredible experience. I have been able to forge new friendships that I never would have expected by having lots of fun and

playing soccer.” He added: “I have also become close with several of the athletes, which is main reason why I’ve wanted to keep playing.”

Not only has unified provided opportunities for those involved, it has also improved the entire athletic program. Lathrop expanded upon this, saying, “unified has helped the athletic program because it has created a sense of school unity and brings kids together that might not necessarily be together. Anytime you have that opportunity, and if athletics can provide that, I think it’s great.”

Kelley mentioned that she notices this as she walks through the hallways and witnesses the athletes high fiving or talking with their partners.

These strong connections and the athletes’ hard work have made the program more successful. This past fall, the unified soccer team made it all the way to semi-finals in playoffs for the first time. Belanger talked about this, saying, “we were motivated to do our best as helpers seeing how hard the athletes worked each day and how much they enjoyed the game. Their positivity is what really fueled us this past season.”

This exposure and participation in unified will help both the athletes and the partners going forward. Kelley mentioned, “having unified is so important because throughout the rest of your life, you are going to be interacting with people from all different backgrounds and abilities and to be a successful person, you need to know how to interact with people, step outside of your comfort zone, and open to opportunities to interact with people you might not normally interact with.” She continued, saying, “from that comes growth, understanding, compassion, empathy, and for unified sports, an opportunity to have a lot of fun.” **M**

- Abby Schmitt
Photos by Brenda Worden

Oyster River Right

The best of rom-coms and teen novels might leave you thinking that high school love starts with a folded note or two hands meeting to pick up a pile of books and binders. However, the new age of technology has led some students into a world of swiping and super-liking that older generations may never truly understand: dating apps.

Whether or not students are already making the switch to online romance, technology-focused culture can be difficult to escape. A recent poll showed that the number one place where singles meet is online, according to the article “An Inside Look at your Favorite Dating Sites” by *The New York Times*. Loosely enforced age restrictions on apps can enable students to engage in the exact same online activities as adults.

“Technology and online dating might not be the best way to find love in high school, but they are a reality that we are going to just have to accept,” said Oyster River student Eliza*. She explained her first experience using a dating app, saying, “I got bored and messed around on Tinder.” As the most popular dating app in the U.S., according to the article “Most popular online dating apps in the United States...” by *Statista*, Tinder allows users to ‘swipe’ other users based on their profiles. If both parties swipe right, users can begin to chat on the app or exchange social media.

“I started using [Tinder] because I had seen it around on social media and it had been the subject of a fair amount of articles and BuzzFeed videos, so I thought it would be entertaining to see what it was like for myself,” she explained. Eliza is not alone in her motives for using the app; according to “Is Tinder Really a Hookup App?” by *Psychology Today*, 48.9% of young adults surveyed in a recent study said that their main motive for using Tinder was the app’s popularity with peers and media.

While Eliza was using the app, she noticed that other high schoolers were also on Tinder. “I actually came across a couple of other kids’ profiles when I was on. I think a lot of people have the same intentions as I did: they’re just curious.”

Although Eliza initially downloaded the app out of boredom, she ended up finding an unexpected connection. “Usually, I wouldn’t even message people since I wasn’t exactly on the app with the intention of seriously meeting anyone. But there was one person that I got actually talking to and we did hang out a few times,” she said. “Overall, it was a fine experience. I don’t regret it, but I probably won’t be back on there anytime soon,” she concluded.

Oyster River student Mary* downloaded Tinder with the intent of finding a friend or romantic partner. “I started using Tinder after my first breakup. I chose to because it’s instant gratification, especially if you’re feeling lonely. It’s also super easy to use, so that helps too,” she said. “It can be a great way to meet new people, but you also

need to be really careful with how you use it. You can’t just be giving out your address or social security number to anyone you meet. It also really depends on the reason why you’re doing it.”

From her experience using Tinder, she explained how seeing other students on the app was not an uncommon occurrence. “Not everyone at Oyster River is using them, but definitely a surprising amount are,” she said. “Regardless of if people are using dating apps specifically, people are absolutely using online resources to get together. Snapchat, Instagram, direct messaging, messenger: that’s how most relationships happen.”

Although Mary didn’t have any particularly bad experiences on the app, she has since found other methods of meeting new people. “People wanted to go out, and I almost went out with this guy because I was really lonely and sad, but then I bailed and deleted the whole app,” Mary said. “I think that face-to-face contact is a lot better, especially if you’re searching for a new romantic partner. Over Snapchat, it might be really easy to talk, but once you meet up

it could get really awkward, and I don’t think it’s very healthy to only rely on what’s online.”

Other students found a similar feeling of awkwardness in using dating apps, especially when they were unsure of if people were presenting their genuine identities. Bertram*, a student who also has experience

“Not everyone at Oyster River is using them, but definitely a surprising amount are. Regardless of if people are using dating apps specifically, people are absolutely using online resources to get together. Snapchat, Instagram, direct messaging, messenger: that’s how most relationships happen.”

-Mary*

using Tinder explained his reasoning for downloading the app, saying, “I joined because I was feeling lonely and nothing was happening with the girls at school, so I had to expand my efforts.” After using Tinder for a short time, he decided that, although the app had some positives, it was overall a bad experience for him. “I felt like I was being catfished a lot, so I never ended up going on any actual dates. I did message some girls though, and they were nice.”

‘Catfishing,’ a term used to describe when an online user uses a fake identity to deceive others, can make dating apps difficult and even dangerous to use. Since apps like Tinder trust users to portray their real identity, it’s easy for someone to enter a fake age and an array of pictures from the internet. Tinder’s age requirement changed to 18+ in 2016, so many high schoolers simply enter a fake age to begin using the site. Before Tinder made the switch to adult-only, 7% of its users were between the ages of 13 and 17, according to “Inside Tinder: Meet the Guys Who Turned Dating into an Addiction” by *Time*. Today, it’s difficult to know how many of the app’s users are actually underaged since it’s so easy to create a disingenuous profile.

Oyster River student Lindsay* admitted to lying about her age on the app, saying, “it was easy. They literally don’t even check it, so all you have to do is put in a fake age.” Lindsay explained that she downloaded the app on a whim while at a party. “I didn’t have any

Names changed for anonymity (all sources were under 18 at the time of their experience using a dating app)

intentions of actually finding love. It was fun and I wanted attention," she said.

Oyster River student John* has never used a dating app himself, but he has heard of a few of his friends trying them out. "I've only heard of a select few people at Oyster River using dating apps, but from what I know, they're using it just to hook up with people. When you're in high school, there are so many people around who you can meet organically, but I would say it's easier for most people to find someone they don't know to hook up with," he said. John spoke on how easy it is for dating app users to change their profile to appear differently than they do in real life, saying, "it's not necessarily that people are getting false perceptions on dating apps, but sometimes they get more of an optimistic perception that they wouldn't see if they met someone in person."

Through his experience dating in high school, John has noticed a slight contrast between online and in-person relationships. "I have a serious girlfriend that I met through high school. It's not necessarily that our relationship is better because we didn't meet online, but it was definitely more organic from the start. We could grow with each other," he said.

Although he is aware of the negatives that come with dating online, especially for high school students, John believes that there's nothing wrong with adults using technology as a tool to find love. "Overall, I think that dating apps are a good, effective modern technology that lets people meet each other in ways that they may not have in the past," he said.

Kim Cassamas, School Counselor at Oyster River, explained how modern technology has had a profound impact on students, and how that impact might make dating apps more appealing. "This generation has always had social media as a part of their life. You have social media outlets that connect you with all sorts of people in different areas already, and I would imagine that if you're a teen who isn't feeling any connection with your peers, who you see every day, you might think, 'why not?'" In an age where students have almost always had access to technology, there's significantly less stigma around expanding the way they meet their significant others. "[They're] already comfortable with the social media aspect. It might be a natural and comforting next step for people," she added. "Students' experiences are already very different with making acquaintances, friends, and finding things in common through social media."

Although Cassamas sees both positives and negatives to students having access to the internet and social media, she has reservations regarding students using dating apps. "I worry about dating apps for teenagers. Many of the teens I work with travel and have unique experiences, but in a way they are still in this Oyster River bubble. I worry that students might be vulnerable to people out there who

have bad intentions," she said.

Computer science teacher Cathi Stetson also weighed in on the topic, saying, "truthfully I don't think it's healthy. Then again, it is the 2000s and this seems to be the way that people find and meet their future spouse or significant other." Despite Stetson's open mindedness about embracing technology, she had reservations about high schoolers being on these apps. "At a young age, it's hard. I think it might be more acceptable for a high school senior or maybe a junior." Additionally, she expressed a fear that students might feel pressure to misrepresent themselves, or compare themselves to others. "We always want to put our best selves on social media; we aren't going to put the crappiest pictures of our self up."

A 2017 study published in the peer-reviewed journal "Body Image" looked into the pressure for users to strive for perfection on dating apps. Out of 1,300 college-aged students, all Tinder users were more likely to have a negative perception of body image than students who didn't use the app, according to the article "Online dating lowers self-esteem and increases depression, studies say" by CNN. Additionally, male users were found to have lower overall self-esteem. Psychologists including Jessica Strübel, co-author of the research study, concluded that Tinder may leave students with an increased awareness of their looks, leaving them critical of their own bodies.

Misrepresentation in pictures can go beyond filters and photo edits. The danger of violent predators portraying false information on dating apps can be fatal. In 2016, a twenty-year-old Kansas sorority girl was beaten and held hostage for six days in a trailer after meeting a man on Tinder. After news of the event surfaced, Tinder released a statement saying that, "people with bad intentions exist everywhere," and the online dating app reminds users to be vigilant about safety.

Stetson acknowledged how important taking safety measures are, stating, "there are absolutely dangers to

it. With everyone you meet you need to be really careful to make sure they're not a predator. You always have to consider: is it real?"

Despite the risks that come with using dating apps, they are still becoming increasingly popular. "There are definitely positives and negatives to online dating, but we can't deny that the switch to the internet is inevitable," said Lindsay. According to online dating site eHarmony, 40 million Americans have used online dating, including 27% of young adults. Additionally, 20% of current committed relationships started on a dating site. "Whether we like it or not, dating apps are the future," said Lindsay.

-Alana Ervin

Artwork by Liev Manck



For Wheel?

A Profile on Chris Hobson

Having been a paraeducator at Oyster River High School for almost three years, Chris Hobson is set to begin his next chapter at Moharimet Elementary School. A friendly face in the halls, outside of school Hobson has a flare for adventure and excitement, which is most apparent in his hobbies of mountain unicycling and indoor rock climbing.

He descends down the steep trail on his first run of the day. The thick tire kicking up dirt and some stray dry leaves as he courses down the trail. Cautiously but confidently he works to balance himself against the uneven terrain beneath him. He shifts his weight to the back side and controls his descent. He does this, however, all on one wheel.

Chris Hobson, now 66, began unicycling in sixth grade. “My friend across the street, in the north of Chicago, he got this unicycle and he didn’t want it anymore, and just said, ‘do you want this unicycle?’ and I said, ‘yeah!’ It took me about a month or so to learn how to ride it on my own, and then I just started riding all the time. Never any tricks, performance stuff, or juggling, just riding around wherever I could.”

Having been an elementary school teacher for 36 years and now a special education one-on-one paraeducator at Oyster River High School, Hobson is a friendly face in the halls, but few know of his unique hobbies outside of school. He is an avid and passionate mountain unicyclist, an indoor climbing enthusiast, outdoor adventurer, and genuine kid at heart.

His most notable extracurricular activity is his fascinating hobby of mountain unicycling, a sport which involves traversing rough terrain similar to mountain biking, but on one wheel.

Hobson was introduced to the unique variation of traditional unicycling while in Singapore in 2010, teaching at the Singapore-American School alongside his wife, Cindy, a speech pathologist. As he often did, Hobson had brought his unicycle with him. While there, he learned of a senior at the school who had a unicycle, but didn’t know how to ride.

Shortly thereafter, he was connected with the boy and progressively taught him how to ride. The boy went on to connect with local

Singaporeans who played hockey on unicycles every Thursday, and every Sunday would ride into the dense tropical jungle on small paths.

Hobson was fascinated by the offroading unicycles and began searching online for his own as he and his wife were heading back to the States. “As soon as we landed, I bought my own. That was in 2012, and that’s all I do now, ride mountain uni.”

He began his new hobby on flat dirt trails like Rails to Trails, which are commonly found throughout the state where unused stretches of railway track are turned into multi-use trails. Then he moved onto simple trails, like Kingman Farm in Madbury, NH which includes a variety of technical and flat terrain.

Once he developed his skillset, strength, and endurance, he was able to move onto harder trails. “I discovered some of the ski mountains transition into trails in the summer, and then I found out about Highland Mountain Park in Tilton. So every year, I



save up money and toward the end of the season when I’m in decent shape, I tackle that. They take me up in the chairlift, and I think, ‘oh this is so fun,’” Hobson says.

Mountain unicycling is a physically demanding sport that encompasses all muscle groups in the body, especially the core, legs, and arms for balance. Because of this, when he goes to harder trails, Hobson limits the number of runs. “I’ll do three or four runs, and I won’t be able to walk for two or three days afterwards because it’s so demanding.”

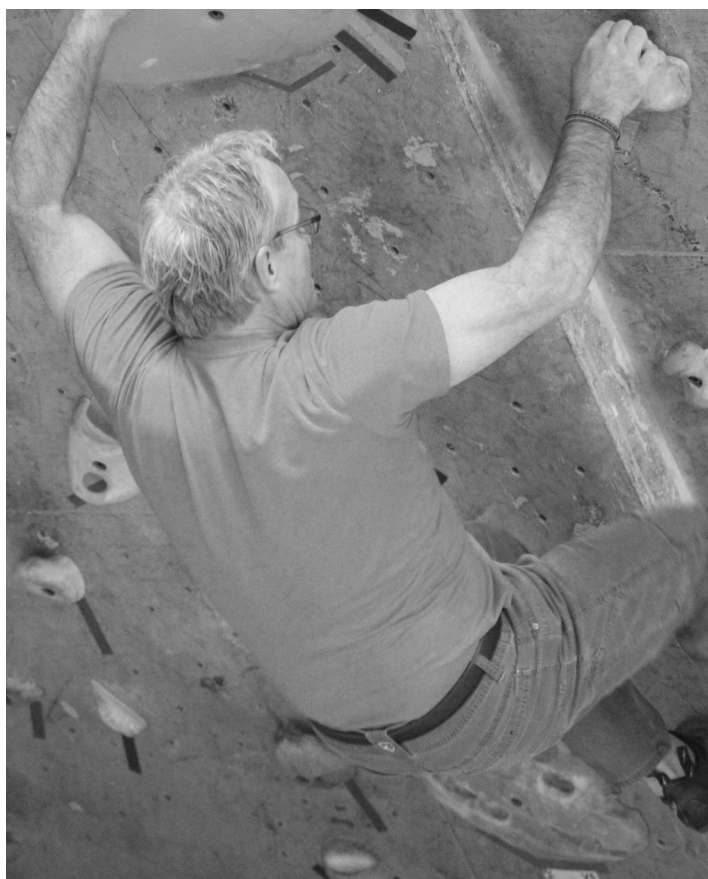
“For me, it’s literally about play,” he says. Though mountain unicycling is a technical sport that requires a great deal of skill and strength, for Hobson, it’s just fun. “I have to play. It keeps me immature, young, and allows me to

do things that I may not be able to do otherwise.”

Hobson now only falls on rare occasion, as he’s become a better and, more notably, a smarter rider. During his days as a less experienced rider, with a more “risk-taker” approach, he was accustomed to falling, and even developed his own point system to how he landed on his falls.

There are two big influences that have swayed his riskier approach to the potentially dangerous sport. “At 66, it takes me a long time to recover, and I want to keep doing this,” Hobson says. He adds that he now implements a “stupid gauge” into his decision making on routes to take during the run, whether or not to go for it. He also adds, “my wife has made me take a pledge to not do stupid things.”

“What I do is play. I want to climb and I want to ride. For me, it’s vigorous play.”



On top of mountain unicycling, Hobson is now a frequent climber at Indoor Ascent in Dover, NH, an indoor climbing gym which has spaces for belaying, bouldering, and training. He was introduced to climbing through his daughter Jessa. “[I got involved with] a middle school climbing club they were running at the Dover Climbing Gym. My dad started taking me every week and would belay me. From there, I started climbing competitively and my dad was the main support for that,” she says.

Like mountain unicycling, he does it because it’s play, and it’s fun. However, climbing has more benefits than just its enjoyable nature. “[Indoor climbing] is perfect because climbing and unicycling are really complementary. Both are core. Both are multi-muscular, full body fun,” he says.

He climbs differently than many of the adventure, technical course seeking climbers at the gym. “[Climbing], that’s my yoga. I only do the easy holds, and I never get injured,” he says. “[It’s] slow, stretchy, breathy.”

Chad Murphy, owner of Indoor Ascent adds, “he down climbs everything. Most people just go up, then drop down. He makes his climbs like a circuit. It is very regimented.” For Hobson, this is the best way to make climbing as applicable to mountain uni as possible.

Another thing that separates Hobson from other climbers is his genuine hatred of traditional workouts. He hasn’t been in a gym in decades. He hates the idea of reps of anything, and he despises the claustrophobic feel of an enclosed gym. His line is, “when I get the urge to workout, I lie down until it passes.”

Climbing and mountain unicycling are the perfect things for Hobson. “I’m a little hyper active, a little ADHD. Climbing and cycling help me focus.” He describes how there is nothing better than being on the trail, saying, “unicycling down a trail on a mountain is very frantic. It is always checking things out, always adjustments...it’s really perfect for my energy level.”

He brings the same genuine energy into his connections with students and teachers at ORHS.

His unusual but thrilling hobby leaves ORHS colleagues and students in awe. “He brought the unicycle in, and the students were just amazed when he came around the building on it. They just loved it,” says Amy Therrien, case manager at ORHS for Hobson.

Hobson is described as a genuine, positive person to whoever he interacts with. “He is one of the most genuine and nicest people I have ever met. Over the years, I have had personal issues and have pulled him aside and been like, ‘hey could you give me advice on this,’ and he drops what he is doing, sits there, and listens, then gives great advice,” says Murphy, owner of Indoor Ascent.

For other climbers at the gym who are hesitant to attempt a tough route or to mount the wall in front of an onlooking crowd, he provides the positive reassurance. Murphy adds, “he’s amazing. He’s so helpful and inviting to all the new people. His energy and calm manner makes everyone feel super welcomed, even when it is their first day.”

His daughter Jessa spoke to Hobson’s caring nature. “I kind of laugh because he just can’t help himself. His care for others, passion for teaching, and positive attitude just bleeds through everything he does. He never wants people to feel unwanted, excluded, or unworthy.”

In his short time at ORHS, he has already made a large impact. Therrien describes him as, “such a positive force in the school. He hasn’t been here very long, but he seems to know everybody, and will engage anyone in conversation. I think he has become a really important member of our community.”

Mark Milliken, Dean of Faculty at ORHS, who used to be a neighbor to Hobson, adds, “he’s always positive and always upbeat. And the mountain unicycling, I can’t believe that. I don’t know how he does it.”

Hobson grew up in a military family, his father a cop/detective in the Army, and mother an educator. “It was a strict household, but if you messed up, you were held accountable. There were some great life lessons that came from that,” he says.

His childhood, like many kids of military families, included lots of moving around. He moved around Asia, Europe, and the Midwest in his early years, and it wasn’t until middle school that



he stayed put at one school.

He was finally able to have consistent schooling through attending both middle and high school in northern Illinois.

Hobson almost enlisted in the Navy. He got involved in scuba diving while in high school and thought that doing underwater demolition for SEAL would be a thrilling job. However, he opted against it, explaining, "I woke up one morning, 24 hours from getting my physical, and I was like, 'why would I want to leave this?'" he says about leaving the comforts of home.

He decided to attend college and follow in his mother's footsteps as an educator. Hobson stayed in Illinois for college and he graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1975 with a major in elementary education. After completing his student teaching, he began his work with elementary school students in Illinois.

"[I] found teaching and that became a vocation, because it took everything of me to become a good teacher," he says. "I just wanted to hang out and be in school, because school was a cool place."

After listening to advice from those close to him, "[I] left education for a year to get a 'real job' after four or five years of teaching," Hobson says. He took a sales job selling educational media materials, where he sold teaching models like a plastic human torso you can take apart for a science class, and educational books, and packets. The job included numerous hours on the road, driving in his company car to other schools in his sales region, Iowa, and Nebraska. He hated it, so he quit and was back to teaching within the year.

Teaching took him to Derry, NH, where he met his wife of now 35 years, who at the time was an interim Speech Pathologist. He describes her as an incredibly active and outdoorsy person just like himself. "We go hiking, and backpacking, and skiing, and on multi day canoe trips. When we had the kids, it became car camping, and fun trips like that," Hobson says. "Now we're avid sea-kayakers."

Hobson has two daughters, Jessa, 29, and Emily, 27. Both went through the Oyster River School District and graduated from the University of New Hampshire. His older daughter, Jessa, worked as a wilderness therapist, and is now assisting at a residential facility for at risk high school kids. His younger daughter, Emily, works in the hospitality business and is now raising a family. Hobson is due to become a grandfather to his second grandkid in May. "All my daughters live in Dover now, so we are all together, and that's really a blessing," he says.

Teaching presented an opportunity to Hobson and his wife that they embraced with open arms; a job teaching in Saudi Arabia. He, his wife, and their two young daughters were only supposed to stay in the country for a year, however, they loved it so much that they



ended up staying for five.

Upon arrival back home, Hobson began teaching in Dover, where he spent ten years. He then went back overseas for two years of teaching in Singapore, followed by a year as a writing facilitator in Dover when he returned once again.

Hobson saw colleagues becoming unhappy with the imposed curriculums being placed onto teachers and decided it was time for him to retire. "At that time, teaching allowed me the freedom to capitalize on my teaching style and I just felt it wasn't as kid-centric anymore," he says.

He recalled the years of freedom to create fun and educational units for kids. "Nobody else was doing what I was doing, yet other teachers were still doing cool stuff. Everybody just had their specialties. We gave kids real learning experiences with authentic assessment, instead of just fill in the bubble, write out the answer, or multiple choice."

Hobson's elementary school teaching career spanned 36 years, teaching at the third, fourth, and fifth grade levels. He ran a card collectors club and a sign language club, and had a positive impact on countless students. "Having people come up to me and say, 'you were my fourth grade teacher, and you were the best teacher I ever had.' To say that I am the best teacher that they ever had, wow, how do you beat that?"


After retiring, Hobson, who had loved teaching so much, once again went to Singapore. A year later, when he came home, he decided to become a paraeducator at Dover. He became a supporter to those teachers he had worked alongside for the past ten years.

"I imagine it's hard to go from a classroom teacher to a para, but he treats it equally as important, and I think that's so cool. He takes pride in what he does," says Milliken.

He also began working an outside education consulting job which involved other paraeducators, so Hobson figured it would be both fun and beneficial to get experience at the high school level.

About three years ago, he was hired by Oyster River High School as a one-on-one paraeducator. "I love what I do. I don't have conferences, report cards, or lesson plans, and when I leave here, my day is done and I can go do other stuff," he says with a smile.

Hobson is planning to continue mountain unicycling, indoor rock climbing, and going on adventures with his wife. He says he looks forward to having a positive influence on as many people as possible, further growing professionally, and enjoying time off. Hobson will continue to be a paraeducator, just as he will continue to play. He jokingly adds, "my wife would not like me very much if I was just sitting around at home."

Hobson encourages people to learn about the incredible sport of mountain unicycling. For videos of both Hobson riding, and professional extreme mountain unicycling, visit mormagazine.com. 

— Owen Tonkin

Photos by Owen Tonkin

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